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SAUL:

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

BY
HENRY ILIOWIZI.

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Dedication.

TO

MISS ESTHER BAUM

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED.

DEAR MADAM:

I beg herewith to avail myself of the author's privilege of dedicating this, my new effort, to one whose blessed career typifies the Jewish ideal of self-sacrificing devotion to the alleviation of human misery. Ostentatious and frivolous as is our age, the hungry soul contemplates with pleasure the vestal consecration of an humble life adorned by the beauty of feminine gentleness, religious sincerity, womanly reserve, and all those virtues which grace that divine womanhood to whom we are indebted for our prophets and poets. While feminine extravagance lavishes enormous sums to gratify vanity, you, dear Madam, are wearing out your precious life in the incessant endeavors to diminish the aggregate of human wretchedness, rising early and retiring late, ever among the cheerless haunts and hovels of the poor and the needy, with compassion visibly beaming from your immaculate countenance. No poetry is half as beautiful as the grandiose epic of a devoted life, illustrated by the luminous trail of a love-inspired soul. That Israel's benign God may prolong your days and crown your gentle ministration with the success philanthropy seeks as her ultimate reward, is the wish and earnest prayer of

Your sincere friend,

HENRY ILIOWIZI.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE stirring period in Israel's history covered by the reign of Saul and David, and culminating in the glorious rule of Solomon, furnishes abundant material for a trilogy, and "Saul" is the first part thereof herewith presented to the public. The ambition to produce a Shakespearean drama is out of the question. It is very strange that the dramatic genius of the ages, while it exhausted itself in singing and dramatizing events which might as well have been consigned to oblivion, found, in the annals of the eternal race, nothing worthier of its poetic inspiration than the preposterous production of a caricature like Shylock. What an everlasting monument of studied unfairness! True, we have a "Nathan the Wise," but its rare presentation on the stage, coupled with its unpopularity with the masses—that hydra-headed ass of history—may be accepted as a sufficient cause for the paucity we alluded to. For genius is neither beyond prejudice nor above material interest. Years ago, when "Joseph" appeared in print, a venerable colleague expressed the wish to see it "*auf den Brettern die die Welt bedeuten.*" The literary gentleman added, that "from such a pulpit, perhaps, our young people might be reached more effectively than from our Temple pulpits." The recent performance of "Joseph" by "Our Students of Jewish History," made a deep impression on the large gathering who came to witness the Biblical drama. "Saul" will appear more pretentious, but the omission of a few paragraphs in Act II.—that is in Samuel's mystic version of creation—will enable intelligent amateurs to play it successfully. As to the professional, let him study the characters of Saul, Samuel, Jonathan and David. The dramatization and personification of Israel's errors, heroism and martyrdom are tasks for which no genius is too lofty, alas! but many are too blind to perceive the wondrous warp and woof of which his epic tale is woven.

THE AUTHOR.

PHILADELPHIA, July, 1894.

ARGUMENT.

ISRAEL'S Elders urge Samuel to choose for them a king. He points to the serious aspects of the proposed change in the theocracy, but Saul is anointed and presented to the tribes. David is a youthful shepherd. Jonathan is a daring warrior. Saul displeases Samuel by disregarding his order, and the prophet's reprimand disheartens the king. A successful war against Ammon affords him a passing ray of cheer. Samuel trains prophetic teachers. He orders a war of extermination against Amalek, and on hearing that Saul failed to carry out fully the divine behest, he informs him that the Lord had torn the kingdom from his hand. Saul is plunged in melancholy. Michal happens to see David in Judean territory, and is desperately in love with the youth. It is David whom Samuel anoints secretly as Israel's future king. In a war with the Philistines their champion, Goliath, challenges the Hebrews to send a man to meet him in single combat. Saul offers his daughter Michal to whomsoever would defeat the giant. David appears on the scene, kills Goliath, and the consequence is a victory over the Philistines, which the damsels celebrate by a song in which David is credited with the greatest triumph. Jealousy maddens Saul, who suspects David to be his successor. David's presence before the king as a minstrel, called in to allay the gloom of the monarch, while it endears the youth to Jonathan, who loves him passionately, gives the princess a chance to confess her love to the Judean singer and hero. In a fit of madness Saul makes an attempt on David's life, who escapes unhurt. Jonathan faces his father's jealousy, and persuades him to give David the promised girl. This is done, however, only to entrap David, and Doeg receives secret orders to assassinate the bridegroom while retired with his bride. Jonathan discovers Saul's evil design, and saves the life of his friend. Samuel dies with a significant prophecy on his lips. Saul is furious, revels in atrocities, lays many schemes to overtake David, and is only sobered of his rancor after he falls into the hand of his supposed adversary, who generously spares his life. Saul confesses his wrong and asks David to return, who prefers to keep aloof from the court. Messengers inform the king that Philistia is out in force. He hurries home. Things look very serious. In his perplexity he resorts to a witch at Endor who conjures up Samuel's ghost. The spectre foretells disaster. Jonathan has a pathetic interview with his father. A plan of quick action is agreed upon. It fails. The Hebrews lose the battle. Jonathan falls. Saul is wounded, escapes, tries to kill himself, and is stabbed by an Amalekite. Retired in Philistine territory, David expects news from the seat of war. At Ziklag he is informed of Israel's disaster. The Elders of Judah arrive to proclaim him king, announcing the end of the House of Saul. David is deeply distressed by the fall of Saul and Jonathan, and he utters his pain in song.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SAUL	King of Israel.
ABINOAM	His wife.
JONATHAN	Their son.
MICHAL	Their daughter.
ABNER	Saul's general.
DOEG	His armor-bearer.
SAMUEL	Israel's leader and prophet.
NATHAN AND GAD	Samuel's followers.
ABIATHAR	A priest.
JESSE	A farmer.
DAVID	His son.
JOAB	David's follower.
GOLIATH	A Philistine giant.
AGAG	King of the Amalekites.

The Witch of Endor, Elders, Citizens, Damsels, Chorus, Hebrew and Philistine Soldiers, Messengers, Attendants, Servants, etc.

Excepting Ziklag, the last scene, which is in Philistia, all other scenes take place on Hebrew territory.

S A U L.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—SAMUEL'S HOME AT RAMAH.

SAMUEL (*to Israel's Elders*).

Thus do our tribes insist on being yoked
With pompous royalty and martial show,
Aping the habitants of Gath unused
To patriarchal guidance heaven-inspired,
Those noble men and women sent to fire
Israel's unsteady heart, too oft unmoved
By faith, in foresight short, in reverence poor.
Unwholesome food ye ask, as greedy youth,
Unwarned not, alas! but unenlightened.—
A king ye crave, and ye shall serve a king,
A lord who shall your sons appoint to do
His biddings, of your daughters minions pick
To feed his lust, while of the herd, as of
The granary and vineyard, his will be
The choicest tithe, and more perchance; beside
The sacrifice of blood exacted by
A monarch unrestrained Ambition to
Appease by war and conquest. Ay, ye shall serve
A mortal King hereafter, hitherto
The One enthroned above the heaven of heavens
Having been our fathers' Guardian Lord.

FIRST ELDER. The people clamor for a chief to fight
Their battles and be judge in peace; herein

We voice their sentiment, unorganized
To break the yoke Philistia holds tight
Around our necks. What evils may be worse
Than those we stood and bear unremedied?

SECOND ELDER. Yea, let us have a king to guard our homes,
And we shall bear the burdens of his court
In lieu of paying ransoms to our foes,
And see our cities plundered or besieged.

THIRD ELDER. A king, my lord, will curb Disunion which
Our tribes divides, now smitten one by one,
In turn by Ammon, Moab, Philistia
Or treacherous Amalek, like a flock
Unguarded by a shepherd's watchful eye.
And since the Philistine united chose
A prince, he from his seat in Gath will wage
Fierce war against us, having Phoenicia in
His grip free of resistance, emptied of
Her sons, who on a rugged island found
A spot whereon to rear a city, with
The sea as fortress to protect her bounds.

FOURTH ELDER. It is the people's will to have a chief
Anointed and with powers vested, sir,
To be in peace our judge, our strength in war;
And, guarded well, this land's abundance will
A royal home with luxuries supply,
And affluence for all, now wasted in
A struggle which consumeth more than would
Five kingly households, not to speak of the
Inglorious yoke we often bore and broke
Ere long once more to feel its galling weight.
Shall we, as hitherto, thereafter take
Ignominy, our yearly tribute pay
The Philistine, who would no Israelite
Allow to bear a sword, nor would a smith
Let ply his trade within our borders, lest
He forge for us a weapon? Well we know
Thy heart, and tho' from Dan to Beer-Sheba none
Was ever loved, obeyed, or honored more

Than thou, thy presence having blessed our land
This many a year, no man in sight insures
A leader for a darker day ; thy sons,
Unlike their sire, promise naught ; thus, unless
Forestalling evil, we against untoward
Events, reverses and confusion arm,
Thy life's invaluable achievements will,
Unfruitful, run to waste, with heathendom
In triumph lording over us ; wherefore,
Delay not, sir, the noblest and most brave
Among our valiant sons to make our king
And let thy wisdom guide him in his task.

ALL THE ELDERS. Yea, choose for us a prince to marshal all
Our tribes as one against the heathen foe,
Who bleeds this land to death, we being slaves
With but a shadow of a nation's name.

SAMUEL. Well do the temper of these tribes I know,
Who, hot as fire, with impatience glow
To ape the heathen, barter faith away,
Supremest sovereignty for mortal sway !
Four hundred years the wonders did not cease
Since Egypt's lord dared the Most High displease,
The thornbush glowed and plague on plague did come,
The tyrant saw his first-born smitten dumb,
When heaven's fire-pillar led the slave,
A sea congealed the fugitive to save,
And melted to devour a mighty host,
Just as the faithless clamored : We are lost !
Was he a king who thus the pagan smote
And taught the law God with His finger wrote ?
With manna ninety hungry myriads fed,
Almighty's truth beneath the heavens spread ?
Or he, who careful of his master's will,
Did thirty pryncedoms with his terrors fill,
The Land of Promise wresting from their hands ?
Since famed among the famous of the lands ?
And when did Israel, oppressed with pain,
Repent his sins and pray for help in vain ?
Remember Mizpah ; terrorized and pale,

I saw you tremble, when tempestuous hail
 Confused the Philistine, who rose and fled,
 With you behind to multiply his dead ;
 My ardent prayer, your remorseful sighs
 Have drawn response, an echo from the skies—
 Let Sidon's carnal altars never rise
 On Israel's heights to claim vile sacrifice ;
 And if my sons unworthy are to lead
 Great men would rise to shield our State and creed.—
 Yet would a king ye have, a vision clear
 Reveals the change in Israel's career. (*Prophetic.*)
 Jeshurun's kings of future days I see,
 In purple robed, or clad in panoply,
 Majestic figures some and glorious bright,
 Unsightly others like the frown of night ;
 And round them eras corresponding flow.
 The glories fade, it is a sight of woe ;
 I see night gather, gather dense and black—
 The kings, the kings, they are the nation's wreck !

(*Exit Samuel.*)

FOURTH ELDER. What meaning has this ecstasy for our
 Petition ?

FIRST ELDER. An instrument of God foretells
 Events to come.

SECOND ELDER. It forebodes kings for us
 And woe to wind up with a whelming fall.

THIRD ELDER. In ages far remote I understand,
 This after eras of prosperity.
 However, come what may in after-times,
 The days we live in should concern us most.

FIRST ELDER. It is a king the people want and now
 We may report thereof the granting ; yes,
 A king we get to put us in fair shape.

(*Exit all Elders.*)

SCENE II.—LAND OF ZUPH. A VALLEY.

(*Enter Saul, followed by a Servant.*)

SAUL. How far in quest of straying brutes shall we
Proceed, Mount Ephraim being far behind
And we a three days' journey from our home?
Return we, lest father leave off caring for
The asses and take thought for us; besides.
I feel forebodings of some change, I know
Not what, and choose not premonitions to
Disdain of visions woven and of thought
Uncommon in a herdsman's head; return
We straight to see if all be well at home.

SERVANT. I guess a witch had been at thee
This night, with Lilith or some other hag.
Who on the moonbeam ride to puzzle one
In sleep, leaving ill-humor and a bent
• To kick a fellow who is not at fault.
Whatever be thy dreaming, sir, I hold
The asses in my head who would not thence
Be whipped; what matters to a man a dream?

SAUL. It matters how it stimulates the mind.

SERVANT. I do not know an ugly thing I did
Not dream of in my days, and here I am
As lusty as a Philistine well-fed;
What are dreams made of, anyhow?

SAUL. Of haze
And thousand nothings every time, except
When, burning into mind and heart, they go
Not with the waking, chase them as one may.

SERVANT. Why, let them sleep unchased, unless it be
A thing of love, then give it chase and hug
It tight.

SAUL. And if it be a thing of awe
That haunts thee like a phantom in the light
Of day, how brush it off?

SERVANT. Then grasp it bravely,
And hold it fast, until it has enough
Of thee or thou of it, as Jacob did
When cornered by a spectre ; those things of air
Should not be dallied with.

SAUL. Those things of air
Spring from portentous mystery, my boy,
Controlling one, themselves impalpable.—
A wizard in my slumbers came with such
A show of unaccountable things as hold
My memory enchanted like a spell.

SERVANT. A wizard ?

SAUL. Such as thou hast never seen,
A prophet like the seer in Shiloh reared.

SERVANT. I heard of him who reads the stars, looks through
Man's thought, dreams while awake, speaks while asleep,
Raves while he prophesies ; a man of hair
Uncut, garments black, long and flowing, eyes
That sink into the soul, words that burn into
One's memory, such is the wizard of whom
The people speak with awe—Hold on, sir, if
I err not he is hereabout, belike
In yonder town, and might remove our fear
About the safety of the brutes we seek.—
There issue damsels to get water, let
Me speak to them who peradventure know

(Enter damsels, jars on head.)

Of him.—We are here strangers, damsels, with
A wish to see the seer if in our path
Or elsewhere in this region he be found.

FIRST DAMSEL. I saw him slay the sacrifice and go.

SECOND DAMSEL. He will next moment come across you, sirs,
Who hitherward appeared to wend his steps
As I for water passed the city's gate. *(Exeunt damsels.)*

SERVANT. And there, all thought, he comes ; accost him, sir—

SAUL (*enter Samuel, lost in a reverie*).

The very figure who my sleep disturbed. (*To himself*).
It is the man of God we wish to see
If it be proper for us to intrude.

SAMUEL (*awaking from his reverie*).

On yonder height with me, the seer, thou, Saul,
Art welcome for the night to eat and drink
And learn to-morrow of strange things for thee
In store, as I the hidden thought see of
Thy heart and what in coming days reserved
Is for the House of Israel, thy heritage.

SAUL (*astonished*).

A spirit, lord, came in thy shape this night
To me in dream, with crown and sceptre and
A horn of oil, commanding me to take
The royal symbols and be monarch, when
My startled heart throbbed heavy and before
I could an answer breathe, the vision fled,
Leaving a void which all the day within
My breast I felt, still aching as though hurt
By these thy pregnant words.—Who am I to
Be thus exalted, as thy speech implies?
The humblest of the humble families
Of Benjamin is mine, among the tribes
The smallest he, and I unfit for aught
Which higher talent claims than watching herds.

SAMUEL (*inspired*).

Hear me, thou son of Kish, I know thy dream,
Know thee and thine ; it is no human scheme
That makes thee Israel's avenging sword,
His King in weal and woe : thus saith the Lord :
Rejected is the eagle by his brood,
My people Baal and Astoreth wooed,
Rejecting me rebellious they demand
A mortal king to rule my Holy Land ;
Resist no further, be it not thy grief
That in my stead they seek an erring chief,
They whom I reared the freest of the free.
An iron rod prefer to Liberty,

My Throne desert, desert my sacred Shrine,
Invest frail man with majesty divine :
Give warning first, then hearken to this voice,
The meekest man enthrone—here is my choice. (*Pause.*)
Thou art the man, do not with fright recoil,
Thou art the King on whom this sacred oil
I herewith pour that far thy power spread,
A kingdom rise that shall no foeman dread.—
But on the tablets of thy memory write,
God loves and shields the humble and contrite ;
Man's majesty is but a ray of His
Who hurls Presumption into the abyss,
Obedience deems the offering of the heart.
King, bide with me, to-morrow homeward start.

(*Exeunt.*)

— — —

SCENE III.—A MOUNTAIN IN JUDAH.

(*Enter David, harp in hand, a garland around his head ;
he is attended by two shepherds.*)

DAVID. This night ye heard the lion roar, while twice
Within a moon the bear and savage boar
I had to combat, so infested is
This region with the beast of prey. I am
At hand; if help be needed, here ye find me.

(*Exeunt shepherds.*)

Those dull-eyed men, except the gift of speech
Misused, are little more than creatures dumb,
Insensible to things around, save what
The lower instinct wakes (*looking skyward*). The silence of
Unbounded space that thrills my soul when I
At night the stars behold, it makes my day
A dream of indefinable longing, yea,
A thirst, a hunger fed by light and love. (*Strikes the harp.*)

There is life in Azure and splendors untold.
Hosannas the angels are singing,
They, rolling the spheres made of topaz and gold
Forever through radiance are winging;
Light-oceans are flowing from cisterns blue.
The Fountain is hidden much higher,
Thence all constellations their glories renew :
Merchabah is floating in fire,
Whereout the Almighty is filling all space
With wonders beyond contemplation,
Nine myriads of seraphim cover His face
To shield from destruction creation :
And we here below, frail creatures of Him
Whose Love is unfathomed as heaven,
Are singing His Greatness, whose pathways are dim,
For naught else has music been given ;
Let Ardor inspire the immortal soul
To sing of the Spirit above,
And ever contemplate life's heavenly goal
In worship embodied and love.
Among the great stars our earth looks not mean,
Nor are we the lowest of creatures ;
If Eden we lost there is many a scene
Yet left us of beautiful features :
As cherubim lovely our damsels are fair
Unequaled in virtue and graces,
The daughters of Judah have raven-black hair,
Enchanting, immaculate faces.

(Dancing and singing.)

In Sharon's vale blossoms the loveliest rose,
On Hermon the dew is most blessed,
But she is the sweetest, the maiden I chose,
Adoring my love unconfessed.

(Enter shepherd alarmed.)

SHEPHERD. Sir, sir, a lion ! a lion ! two lions !

DAVID *(seizing his arms)*. Get clubs.— *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE IV.—MIZPAH. A STREET.

(Enter a number of Judeans.)

FIRST JUDEAN. I say, we are not treated well in the
Concern of giving us a king; the lot
Hath fallen on the tribe of Benjamin,
Then on the longest son of Kish, and we
Judeans seem to count for nothing in
The choice.

SECOND JUDEAN. The lot, the lot, there is the rub,
You see; if we had choice it would not come
To this, but if we choose by lot it looks
As tho' he be the marked man; and if
The prophet back him, and ye saw it clear,
We must the Benjamite acknowledge lord.

THIRD JUDEAN. We must not if no good will come therefrom;
We want a warrior chief, not one who cares
For asses more than arms; who heard of Saul
Beyond the pasture's mead and bennery?

FIRST JUDEAN. I say we are not handled well, say what
Ye please; it will be hard for Judah to
Obey the least of Israel's tribes, but what
Of that? scarce room for preference is left,
He being chosen and approved it seems
By many Ephraimites.

(Cries are heard: "Long live the King!")

SECOND JUDEAN. Ye hear the joy,
And there the prophet and the King-elect.

(Enter Samuel and Saul, followed by Elders and a crowd.)

SAMUEL *(pointing to Saul)*.

The Lord's anointed, Israel, your King,
Behold, the like of whom there is not in
Your broad domain, your prince in peace and war,
Since you like other nations would be ruled;
Hereafter in all matter bow to him,
Obey him prompt, the welfare of the land

Concerning, he having power to enforce
 His will and levy tribute as he choose.
 Now, rally round Jeshurun's banner, sons
 Of Israel, and let Amalek feel
 The vengeance of the Lord, of yore by Him
 To extirpation doomed, a treacherous brood
 Delivered to the sword.—Philistia
 Henceforth no tribute hand, but arm at once
 Her inroads to repel; she, hateful in
 Her means a nation to unman, shall first
 Be struck by you she undefended thinks. (*To Saul.*)
 Yea, arm the tribes with reverence first for God
 And holy things, and then with weapons to
 Amaze the foeman and reclaim what is
 Our heritage accorded from On High.
 Thine eyes in prayer skyward turn, O King,
 Whenever help is wanted: Him adore
 And seek in daily intercourse, else all
 Will end in failure and confusion, woe
 And lamentation.—Pay homage to the Lord's
 Anointed, House of Israel, rejoice!

ALL. Long live the King! long rule the House of Saul!

SCENE V.—GIBEAH. AN OPEN PLACE.

(*Enter Jonathan and Abner.*)

ABNER. No, prince, I am not inconsiderate
 And may a motley throng of yelling fools
 Despise unprimanded; harmless brutes
 There be who walk and swallow food like men,
 And these I leave alone to twaddle as
 They please; but he make peace with God, who in
 My sense of honor injures me; I'll cleave
 Him clean from pate to sole.

JONATHAN. And then regret
 The deed unworthy of a sensible man
 Like thee, Abner, too manly to be small.

ABNER. I hate a sneak, a hypocrite, a liar,
And if one thwart my path, by this my sword,
Which from a heathen's palsied grasp I tore,
Azazel shall not save him from my wrath!
What? pass by belching Impudence unstung?

JONATHAN. Do what thou mayest, Abner, curs will bark
And gnash their teeth; I strike at them that bite;
In pity rather than in anger do
I smite the rogue; how often did I not
Hear Mockery vilify the son of Kish?
My gall did overboil, I bit my lip,
But threats I uttered none; nor moved a hand
Though every finger itchèd for the sword.
Peculiar is the Hebrew in his ways;
A generous heart, an earnest soul is his,
Compassion being of himself a part,
And gratitude his quality withal,
Else easy led astray by fashion and
Surrounding vice, too quick to take offence
And see the darker side of things; yet once
Convinced of error he will submissive yield,
As earnest in his holy zeal as death.

ABNER. Thou hast depicted him I know too well
And love not less because of his defects:
Yet learn he shall to follow them who lead
Unmurmuring, nor fault find with a King
Who does in spirit tower high above
The multitude as he in body dwarfs
The tallest man on foot. The Ephraimites
Among our adversaries are the worst,
Who would not call the monarch *great* but *long*.

JONATHAN. Let Envy on her venom feed; it is
A sneer and should no bitterness engender;
Theirs is a haughty tribe and ours the least.

ABNER. A sneer it was that Jonathan incensed,
When single-handed he a camp did storm
To show himself a man who dares a thing.

JONATHAN. To show myself a man who dares a thing—
This was the cause and not the heathen's taunt
That made me climb on hand and foot to spread
Confusion on the height of Michmash, where,
Intrenched amidst a maze of rock and crag,
The Philistine his dragon's nest supposed
Impregnable. "Behold, yon outpost of
The foe an eyesore is to me and mine,"
I to my trusty armor-bearer said ;
"Come, let us feel the heathen, whom perchance
Almighty will deliver to our arms,
He having might to save the many by
The few." Agreed we cross the valley and
Confront the garrison, they laughing at
Our hardihood. "Come up that we see more
Of you," they shout. And up we came to strike
Them with astonishment ; full twenty fell
Under my heavy blows, the others fled
Pursued by father and thyself, who led
The few to rout the multitude.—But why
Rehash a story threadbare by this time ?

ABNER. No, never, modest tho' thou art, decline
To tell a tale that Emulation stirs
In young and old to do the like and be
Renowned thro' a deed that never dies ;
We need great memories to fire youth.

JONATHAN. I heard enough of this, brave Abner, not
Ungrateful for a generous word, but oft
Embarrassed by unmeasured praise bestowed
On me for victory that came of God.
Philistia will give us chance to feel
Her pulse again, when others—this I trust—
And thou among them, will my transient fame
Eclipse by such a brilliancy of deeds
As will a brighter era in our annals
Open, the House of Saul exalting high.

ABNER. Take Abner's hand, my prince, which shall be thine
As long as it may grasp a weapon in

Support of iron manhood tempered by
The gentlest vein that graces womanhood.

JONATHAN (*taking Abner's hand*).

My father is the King thy loyalty
To own, which means not, Abner, on my part
Indifference to thy friendship rated high
And treasured as a cherished boon.—Look there,
Who are those strangers coming hitherward?

(*Enter strangers, followed by a crowd.*)

FIRST STRANGER. Good sirs, where may we see the mighty man
Whom Samuel anointed King? If ye
Be men of standing save us from a fate
Much worse than death.

JONATHAN. A fate much worse than death,
It must be being eaten while alive.

ABNER. Who is he that would hurt you, friends? be brief—

SECOND STRANGER. We left our city Jabesh-gilead,
In sore distress, with death without and pest
Within, beleaguered by a wolfish foe,
And if no help come in a week—such is
Our state in brief—each Gileadite will have,
Beside the yoke of slavery on his neck,
His right eye from its socket plucked.

JONATHAN AND ABNER. Horrible!

FIRST STRANGER. Who knows not Ammon's ruthless king,
Nahash,
Who with his cohorts waits for our return
To do the thing that will our tribes disgrace?

JONATHAN. Be comforted, the King I will myself
Advise of your distress, and arm he will,
I doubt not, to oppose your cruel foe. (*Exit Jonathan.*)

ABNER. How strong are they who Jabesh hold besieged?

SECOND STRANGER. Twelve thousand Ammonites enclose our
wives
And babes defended by a famished band,
Who watch keep night and day, lest thro' a breach

The insolent besiegers burst on them,
As bloody tigers on a flock of sheep.

ABNER. There is no atom in my blood that is
Not chilled with horror while I burn to fall
Upon that pack of brutes and tear them all
To shreds. I see the King there come apace ;
Brave Jonathan inspired him to act.

(Enter Saul, Jonathan, Doeg, and a crowd of people.)

FIRST STRANGER. Oh, help us, lord, we are poor Gileadites.

SAUL. Save us the loss of time thy words consume,
And hurry home to comfort the distressed ;
For as my name is Saul, before that orb
Will gild the world a second time, it shall
Be known three score of miles around, that he
Who answers not our call to join our ranks
Against a beastly enemy, will see
His cattle cut till none is left to turn
The fallow of his field.—A heifer, cut
In quarters, send as warning, Jonathan,
And have our forces mustered for the march.

(Exit Jonathan. Enter a Messenger.)

What is it Samuel would have us do ?

MESSENGER. The prophet's vision augurs victory,
O King, and that thy host undaunted breast
Accursed Ammon, himself will share the risks
And hardships of the war. The Jordan's bank
Will see him ere thy warriors cross its tide.

SAUL *(to Abner)*. The rising moon shall find us on the road ;
Summon at once all able-bodied men
To swell our thin battalions hereabout,
Our sons to follow up our force with such
As hurry to obey our call ; for I
Am hot with anger at the bestial chief
Who shall the Hebrew's ire learn to rate.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—GIBEAH. HOME OF SAUL. A ROOM.

SAUL. Oh, for the vast horizon fringed with
Eternal rocks ; or forest ringing with
The song of happy bird ; or meadow bathed
In dew as liquid jewel hanging on
Each blade and flower, with brook and fountain and
The winged world that in the grass makes music !
I blame thee not, thrice blessed Serenity,
For fleeing haunts unsuitable for peace
To frequent, choosing thy abodes beneath
The laughing sky where smiling Nature makes
The heart respond to her unruffled mien.
Sweet Peace, wouldst thou not on the dizzy height
Of royalty the herdsman favor who
Unwilling left the turf ? What change in me
Did scare thee off that Melancholy fills
Thy ever-blessed domain ? Come, pour thy balm
Into my fevered brain disturbed by fear
Of dark futurity yet unrevealed.
When did the eminence I court that shows
A fearful deep below ?—If into it
I fall—forbid it, Lord !—There comes my wife.

(Enter Ahinoam.)

It is an early hour for queens to rise,
Ahinoam.

AHINOAM. And for kings to have no rest
Whatever seems more serious than an hour's
Repose forfeited by a worried woman ;
Thou art unhappy, Saul, unhappy as
Thy wife thro' thy unhappiness, unless

Thou wilt thy soul unburden, so that I,
If helpless to assuage thy troubled breast,
At least have certainty thereof, which is
Not half as bad as fearful doubt unuttered.

SAUL. Enough if thou dost guess the cause, the rest
Be undivided buried in my heart.

AHINOAM. Thy children's mother honor, Saul, and let
Me of thy grief have part as of the fame
Thy triumphs have of late brought on our house.

SAUL (*shaking his head*).
The fame, the fame—I would to God we were
Unfamed, O wife, and with our sons unknown!

AHINOAM. Then do the crown resign and watch our herds.

SAUL. The crown, the crown—uncourted did it come
To me, unwished; but once anointed I
Should rather lose my head than leave my post
Unhonored. Woman, I shall die a King,
And never was a prince more worthy of
Succession than our valiant Jonathan,
He having lustre shed upon our house—
But will he be my heir?

AHINOAM. My Jonathan!
Beloved of all, the nation's favorite,
Why weave far possibilities of doubt
When, in the prime of manhood now, thou mayst
A score of years and more be mighty King,
And further shape this kingdom's destiny
To suit thy purpose and the people's weal?
An army rose against thy harsh decree
That doomed him, who has unconsciously
Thy bidding slighted, binding all to touch
Before the foe's defeat, nor food, nor drink,
And now his name throughout the land resounds
With valor coupled and the ring of praise,
And virtue rare among the qualities
Of giddy youth. The oldest being he

And worthiest of our house, why should the tribes
A ruler elsewhere seek and him reject ?

SAUL. The wizard's voice, who made the herdsman King,
Is not for us, Ahinoam, hereafter.

AHINOAM. Thou art
The Lord's anointed by his lip, and they,
Who first thy title questioned to the throne,
Seeing the heathen smitten by thine hand,
Rejoice at thy election more and more ;
Why dread a man so near his death-bed, Saul ?

SAUL. The man thou speakest of so lightly, wife,
To prove himself resistless, made the skies
Respond to his appeal, when at his call
The sun withdrew his beam, the thunder rolled,
The torrents pouring in a deluge to
Confirm his power. Him in Gilgal I
Displeased unwilling. Impatient of delay
I saw my army dwindle, gathered there
To see him offer sacrifice and pray
For new success against the enemy.
Another hour and things had passed off well.
He came too late, too late for me to show
Him reverence ; there our doom I heard—our doom—
Our Jonathan with me.

AHINOAM. What happened since
Was victory and conquest, Ammon, Edom,
Philistia and Zobah being humbled
By thee, the crownèd head of Israel.

SAUL. Our Jonathan appears, it must be news,
Too early to be good.—Thy tidings, boy ?

(Enter Jonathan.)

JONATHAN. The message comes from Ramah.

SAUL. From Samuel ?

JONATHAN. His messenger would have a word with thee
Alone ; he breathes war, meseems.

SAUL. No peace
From yonder quarter I expect.—Admit
The man, and be with Abner near at hand.
(*Exeunt Jonathan and Ahinoam. Enter Messenger.*)
Possess me briefly of thy master's will.

MESSANGER. Exhausted from the run I stand before
Thee, King, the prophet's charge upon my lip.
In dead of night, the first watch having passed,
I heard him cry in ecstasy: "Arise,
Arise, and post to Gibeah, that he
Whom God has chosen smite Amalek with
The sword, smite age and youth, no vestige leave
Of them, abhorred of earth and heaven. Spare he
The Kenites ever to the Hebrew friendly,
Else havoc be the rule, unsparing aught,
They having spared nor dame, nor child, as fierce
Hyenas slaughtering the undefended."
This uttered, he to rest retired, while I
The saddle sought and mule, and here I am.

SAUL. Go, have thy sleep and meet me at the board
This forenoon ere thou goest hence.—Doeg!
(*Exit Messenger.*)

Doeg!—It will be lively work.—Doeg!
The old man might relent if I the foe
Defeat, exterminate as he commands.
Agag is mighty in the field,—Doeg! (*Enter Doeg.*)
Let Jonathan and Abner meet me at
The council chamber: it is war, Doeg!
War, with no room for pity left. (*Exit Saul.*)

DOEG. No room
For pity left, poor King! how happy to
Subserve the fancies of a madman like
The scold of Ramah. What matters it to me
Who am devoid of holy sap, and would
Be hedgehog rather than a monarch thus
Encumbered with a raving maniac, whose
Very sight gives me the jaundice and a score
Of other ills. A full-fledged Edomite.

By heritage a hunter, titles seem
Less valuable to me than Mammon's gift,
A woman's welcome, and a hearty meal ;
They of Hebraic bent a glittering show
Of tinsel deem a prize worth dying for.—
I serve my purpose here, and am no tool :
If Esau Jacob blinds, who is the fool ?

SCENE II.—RAMAH. HOUSE OF SAMUEL.

SAMUEL (*surrounded by his pupils*).'

Thou Ever-One, in space and time Infinite,
Revealing unrevealed, transcending mind's
Ethereal faculty that longing would
The endless and eternal fathom, One
The All containing, therein uncontained,
May heavenly Inspiration touch with flame
Supernal my enraptured soul, so that
The spirit sky-enkindled thrill with glow
Prophetic, as Thy instrument of yore
When Horeb rung the messages of heaven ;
For nor Ionia's Muse, nor Helicon's
Hears invocation of Jehovah's bard,
Who at the Holiest of Holies hath
His mind in empyrean fire bathed,
Then rises high above Parnassus as
Aldebaran above the moon. Spirit
Of Thy uncounted hosts a seraph send
To cleanse this lip and sight give to the soul,
So that I may commune with Thee, like him
Who first beheld the thornbush glow, and on
The top of Sinai heard the Holiest Voice ;
For they around me, who Thy glories shall
Recount to ages yet unborn, and earth
Make sacred like a star in azure's deep,
Are thirsting for Thy Truth, which I with awe

Contemplate, so deep that Meditation shrinks
And speech recoils aghast from utterance
Unuttered hitherto in any tongue.

CHORUS. Reveal us, reveal us, O master, reveal
The grandest of works God created ;
We listen enraptured with ecstatic zeal,
Our hunger, our thirst unabated

SAMUEL. Thy wing, Imagination, swifter than
The deathful spark that life destroys unhurt,
Unfold that thereon sweeping over deeps
Unfathomed, space unmeasured, I reveal
To them I teach the secrets hidden from
The mortal eye, unless by Thee enlightened.
Into the Sanctuary of the increate
Inane I thirst to penetrate, that I
May tell how formless Chaos ruled the Void,
Thy Thought evolving myriad solar spheres
That rose to vanish in unyielding Night. (*To the Chorus.*)
Nine billion cycles twelve times multiplied
By twelve, then trebled by the years we count
Since first the sun his radiance hither sent,
Omnipotence with Self-sufficiency
Communed, revolving whether it be wise
To bid eternal Silence ope the Vast
Wherein in undisturbed dark lay hid
Potential seed of constellations bright
And elemental potencies, which since
Made stir the upper and the nether spheres
With multitudinous life, so manifest
Below where marvelous creatures teem mid wealth
Of flower and herb, which healing virtues hide.
Wisdom, Almighty's first-begotten, sprung then
Of the Infinite Brain, to whom the All-
Beholding Holy-One and Hidden thus :

"Thee, first-born of the Highest Essence, I
Appoint creative Power, armed with Will
Omnipotent, to whom the boundless Vast
And what therein is latent of all things

To be in spirit or in grosser shape
Obedience owe and render undelayed ;
Inscrutable designs are Mine conceived
For all futurity the compass of
Inferior being to surpass as does
Infinity each part thereof exceed,
And I Infinity in space, in time
Eternity, embracing unembraced.
Thus brooding since by Mine behest gray Time
Her wings outspread, I hold in Me mature
For birth Immensity to vest Myself
With glories praised by hosts of higher and
Of lower station, planned to worship Me,
Concealed in Mystery, My garments dim
Reflex proclaiming that I Am the One
Most Perfect and forever unfathomable.
My shadow, Light, now from the face of Night
And Chaos hidden, shall in great cataracts
A bursting fire-deluge spread throughout
Unbroken dark, assuming spheric shape,
And march in clustered lights innumerable,
Each other prompting by immutable Law ;
Not purposeless, but for mysterious ends,
Attained not ere I see Myself fulfilled
In them who shall, unseen or visible,
The higher heavens and the nether spheres
Control, endowed with freest choice to rise
As high as pure ethereal virtues may,
Or sink to pass probations long and hard,
Remote from Bliss, who in My Presence dwells ! ”

CHORUS. We are overpowered, O Wisdom Supreme,
Creator of spirit and matter ;
Thy grandeur be ever our loftiest theme,
Than kingdoms Thy Wisdom is better.

SAMUEL. Thus brief the Fountain-head of all that was
To be outlined Creation when, as from
A thundercloud at night the lightning's flash
The thought outwings that would its course discern,

Our Universe once more burst into blaze,
Light-oceans darting thro' empyreal vasts,
Once more to vanish in the rayless deep,
No void henceforth, but full from heaven's top
Down to the nethermost abyss of God's
Similitude, Creation's holiest work,
A man in form of living radiance made
And burning flame, a sable vesture, as
A cloud the sun's effulgence, covered half,
And this not longer than it took the Voice
Of Mystery to say : " Let there be light."
Forthwith black Night her raven pennons spread
To fly precipitous from Ether set
Ablaze by dazzling effluence that in
That mystic likeness focused, thence darted forth
A tenfold stream of generative warmth,
The potent flood Commotion waking in
Responsive energies, stirring unformed
Cosmos, until each atom yielded to
Resistless Rule, now manifest with might
And glory vested, glowing like a host
Of suns unsheathed, ten in one, yet one
Complete in head and limb, less doubtful than
The signs of Zodiac in significance.

CHORUS (*inspired*).

The birth of the soul, the spirit was this
Whom later a body was given ;
She sprung from the holiest regions of bliss
And longs to return to heaven ;
Or was it a power of some higher mold ?
O master, enlighten us further ;
That Godlike our soul be the Scriptures unfold,
The earth of the body is mother.

SAMUEL. Of the Unbounded One the Image this
Creative by His Will omnipotent
And perfect or imperfect rendered as
He chooses to endow it full or otherwise ;
And quicker than Medusa's fabled head

Sky-bearing Atlas turned into rock,
 The tenfold wonder spread infinitely
 Until Immensity was full thereof
 When, multiplying, it breathed forth a maze
 Of stars and brilliant galaxies, each one
 The semblance bearing of the Archetype
 Who bade them shine, Himself all undiminished,
 So vast a Universe of liquid spheres
 That numbers could not name their multitudes,
 Nor parasangs their interspaces measure,
 Unbroken yet by grosser orbs to be.
 As head and heart the human form inspire
 And blessèd life shows happiness in joy,
 The mystic firmament, instinct with soul,
 The spheric march to heaven's new harp began
 With such responses from all deeps and heights
 As made the heavens resonant with song
 And Harmony the starry spaces thrill,
 Tho' over the lower hosts the higher are
 So far that light requires myriad years
 To twinkle at a sister star below,
 In cadence wheeling to the self-same law.
 Thus heaven's primordial frame with emblems teemed
 In constellations cut, God's Alphabet
 Upon the face of azure written, often
 Misread by him who misconstrues the speech
 Of symbols misconceived, else fabulous brutes
 Name in the skies had none, as Dragon, Hydra,
 Aquarius, Chameleon and Centaur ; or beast
 In forest, field or water seen ; or things
 Of human make ; or names of myth, Orion
 And Cepheus, Andromeda and Hercules,
 As tho' to prove the childish sense of man.

Mammon this era governs unopposed,
 That worships matter more than aught conceived
 Of spiritual sway and, prone to scoff,
 Of vision short, as owl that shuns the day
 For overflow of light, perchance with scorn,
 At best unedified and slow will take

Enlightenment of ethereal beings first
 Created, first to be and holiest in
 The scale of being, above all others sprung
 Of highest Effluence, thence Seraphim
 Their name, invisible ministers of Him
 Whose Breath Infinity inflamed and then
 Seraphic choirs, ten divisions, each
 Too numerous for the mind to compass, all
 A host outnumbering a thousandfold
 The stars, thenceforward in their keeping, who
 Before Matatron bow; he, angels' chief
 And master, full empowered from On High
 To build the nether hosts, forthwith thro' space
 The potency in him personified
 Diffused; his fiat rung in words to which
 Responding Ether bodied forth a host
 Of Cherubim, ordained inferior for
 Inferior station; harp in hand they sprung
 As numberless as those of highest rank,
 But able to assume corporeal shape,
 The Cherub's recompense for being less
 Than Seraph dowered, and in scale less high,
 Tho' blissful like the other each, and than
 Hyperion more beautiful and mighty,
 In song surpassing him whose offspring moved
 The nether world, and softened brute and stone.
 Archangels marshal the celestial hosts,
 Nine myriad squadrons form the vanguard's corps,
 The rearfront's file twelve times that number make
 That shoot from star to star like beams of light
 And make the nether spheres resound in unison:

CHORUS "Creator, Thee, we praise, 'ourselves Thy work
 And all the circling orbs and Seraphim
 Conceived in light for ends inscrutable;
 We thus called forth Thy glories to extol,
 Who art exalted higher than all height,
 Thy Wisdom glorify as deep as all
 The deeps that give no measure of Thyself,
 Encompassing the void Inane, therein

The Universe and what is yet unshaped.
 In things revealed Thy wonders overawe
 Seraphic comprehension ; how shall we
 The unrevealed Grandeur of Thyself
 Behold, unless sustained by Thee, who wilt
 Not suffer us to vanish, who thus dwell
 Enskied beneath Merchabah's holy Throne,
 That fills the endless empyrean with such
 Consuming blaze as would, uncovered, burn
 The creatures of Thy Love ; so fearful of
 Annihilation we, enshrined in Joy
 Immortal, hymning praise, our blissful share.
 With Thee Benignity and Grace upon
 Merchabah bide, thereon Intelligence
 And Justice hold their sway ; sweet Beauty beams,
 And Splendor shines therefrom, with Firmness and
 Foundation linked and Love ; and these beneath
 Thy Kingdom's Crown endure forevermore."

SAMUEL. Sublunar music so unlike is notes
 Of heavenly Concord born, that soothing tho'
 And rapturous it be to heart and mind,
 It but cherubic strains re-echoes faint,
 Comparable to twilight breaking thro'
 A depth of cloud and making sunshine gloom
 Below, tho' welcomer than utter night.
 That song's supernal might to comprehend,
 It is enough to know that, flowing in
 Melodious waves, it charmed worlds, and in
 Chaotic deeps, beyond Creation's Vast,
 Another Vast of darkness conjured full
 Of legions numberless as they above,
 But hideous as to form, Plutonian black,
 With eyes that glow as burning coal, or as
 The hungry wolf's when roving for his prey,
 Yet orderly in line and phalanx ranked,
 With Samaël as potentate and chief ;
 Endowed, besides, with mighty wing the black
 Abyss to sweep, their empire, therein
 Confined to rule as destined from On High.

Inferior else and changeable as things
Corruption withers, they the Archityper's
Remotest issue represent, content
Withal in darkness to be dark and shun
Domains superior beings hold, except
It be to counteract whatever good
From yonder Power sprung, who made them less
To be the more when risen high by worth ;
For Grace no guiltless creature suffers to
Be doomed, nor unforgiven leaveth guilt,
However grave.

Betwixt those higher and
These lower hosts stands man, created last
And free, but tempted much by evil things
Held out to lure him into Error ; they
In darkness bidding, labor to undo
Him, sprung of God in spirit and of clay
In mortal frame, long weltering in vice
And carnal beastliness, till Israel
Salvation heralded and wrought ere this,
Tho' unsuccessful hitherto, himself
A prey to sensual greed, degrading with
Each fallen age, unless reclaimed by dire
Adversity, or prophets fire-tongued.—

CHORUS. Almighty's decree we know it to be
That Eden to man he returned ;
Tho' cycles fly fast and dark be the past,
We know why the thornbush burned ;
God works not like men of limited ken,
His purpose the after-times read it ;
By thy spirit fired we are all inspired,
Thy wisdom, dear master, we need it.

SCENE III.—GILGAL. AN OPEN PLACE.

(Enter Abner, Jonathan and Doeg, each leading a troop, followed by Saul, before whom Agag is led in chains, a crowd follows.)

SAUL. Your greatest day is this and mine, ye sons
Of Israel, since He above made me
His vengeful arm implacably to smite
Implacable enemies, who ever since
Our sires Egypt left hang at their heels,
Like beasts of blood destroying in the rear
The aged and the helpless wanderers,
And laying ambush to ensnare the child.
Our friends Amalek hated, with our foes
Conspired to exterminate our tribes ;
Wherefore Annihilation overtook
Them whom to punish we our weapons drew.—
Behold him here who fed on massacre,
And reveled in their agonies, who in
His dens did under torture perish, he
As tiger thirsting for the Hebrew's blood.

AGAG. Thy God enjoins pity, King, which thou
Deniest me, thus fallen deep beyond
Recovery, disgraced, enslaved and doomed ;
Wouldst thou not have me serve thee rather than
To death deliver ? Alas, I fear the grave !

SAUL. Our God commands to sweep Amalek's brood
And wipe it out from under heaven, slave ! *(To Doeg.)*
Let him my verdict out of sight await,
While for our triumph we the Lord extol,
As when near Kishon's rushing tide of yore,
Almighty having smitten Sissera's host,
Inspired Deborah gave praise in song.

(Doeg removes Agag.)

ALL. We thank thee, Lord, our heart is light,
The mighty melt before thy Breath,
Amalek vanished at thy wrath
As phantoms vanish with the night.

- We pray, O Father, guard our land,
May like Amalek all our foes
Thy vengeance blast; relieve our woes,
Come Peace and Plenty from thy hand.

ABNER. I voice the people's prayer, King, who of
Amalek's flocks the best for sacrifice
Have hither brought unslain; let these be spared
For timely offerings, the warriors pray;
What good will slaughter do of harmless brute,
Now that their owners swept are from the earth?

SAUL. Let their request be gratified, lest my
Refusal mar the joyance of the hour.

VOICES. The prophet, the prophet!

(Enter Samuel, who fixes a stern look at Saul.)

SAUL (*advancing reverently*). We bless thy coming,
Thou blessèd of the Lord; thy bidding is
Fulfilled, for utterly destroyed are they
Abhorred of God.

SAMUEL (*stern*). What means the bleating then
Of sheep I hear, the lowing of the herds
That stir the air?—They are the sounds of life?—

SAUL. For sacred rites the people spared the best
That sacrifice of them be offered to
Thy God.

SAMUEL. King, dead thy reverence for that God
Thou shouldst obey, unpardonable thy sin,
Defiance showing and a stubborn mind.

SAUL. Unwise it seemed to curb the people's zeal
To serve a holy purpose when thy life
The lesson taught to serve the Only One.

SAMUEL. Unrighteous Disobedience grieves the Lord,
Who in a lowly spirit takes delight,
Rejects the offerings of rebellious hearts,
The humble loves, who hearken to his Voice;
The sin of witchcraft from rebellion springs,
From stubbornness iniquity and vice.—

Behold, thou didst the Lord's behest reject,
He doth reject thee as his people's King.

SAUL (*pale*). Reject me, sir? if I have erred there will
Be mercy in the skies an error to
Forgive; I meant not Heaven to offend

(*Samuel turns to go.*)

Nor thee.—Thou wilt not thus withdraw and leave
Me lowered in the nation's eye.

(*Seizes Samuel's robe and tears it.*)

SAMUEL. And this
The sign; the grace of royalty from thee
Almighty tore that it be given to
A better man.

SAUL. Yet leave me not disgraced
But come that I before God's altar pray.—
This honor grant me ere thou goest hence.

SAMUEL. Bring forth Agag whom God his breath denies.
Why lives he, King, who should be food for birds?

(*Agag brought forth.*)

SAUL. I held him that his death our triumph crown.

AGAG. What fearful God is yours, who on my head
His volleyed thunderbolts unloads! O Death,
Why spared thy myriad-winged agency
My life where honor garlands winds for those
Who warring fall to let me forfeit it
In shame? Oh, bitter, bitter is thy sting.

SAMUEL. Too long thy blood-polluted soul debased
Creation's noblest mold; as heretofore
Thy feline rage bereavement made the cause
Of thousand weeping dames, so be thy end
Thereafter source of woe to her who bore
Thee to her shame. The dogs devour thy flesh.

(*The curtain falls.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I.—GIBEAH. HOME OF SAUL.

(*Ahinoam and Michal.*)

AHINOAM. Thou, too, art not the same, my child, as tho'
Contagion of thy father's gathering gloom
Gave thee a cloud; if his unease be cause
Of thy dejection, daughter, twilight will
The hues of sable night to him assume
If he suspect the workings of his mood
On thee, the favored of his preference.

MICHAL. Why give me this attention, mother, when
He undivided needs thy sympathy
And watchful care? Nor grief nor grievance have
I to account for cheerless thoughts that come
And go.

AHINOAM. And *go* and *grow* comes nearer truth.
Dark Melancholy on thy forehead seats,
The flower of beauty fading on thy cheek
For want of rest and proper nourishment,
Thyself consuming by a heartache none
May cure because denied the confidence;
How, then, the healing remedy supply?

MICHAL. When did thy Michal secrecy toward thee
A virtue make before Necessity
Enforced the reticence she cannot break?
I am nor sick in body nor in mind
Unsound, but somewhat moody, that is all;
And since my humor tortures thee I shall
Hereafter smile, whatever pressure I
Endure within.—Yes, father needs our cheer;
We must forget ourselves and live for him.

AHINOAM. Strange world! what may a daughter worry that
Her mother must not know! Of me a part
Thy inward should to me unbosom as
A flower does to the morning sun. Fie, fie,
Necessity! what know ye, girls of life's .
Anxieties a mother's love sustains!
If thou hast sounded love's unfathomed deep,
Thou wouldst not with my sorrows trifle thus.

MICHAL (*absent-minded*).

If I had sounded love's unfathomed deep!—

AHINOAM (*attentive*). Have incidentally I hit the clue?

MICHAL (*blushing*). Must I betray my secret that thou laugh
At me?

AHINOAM. Oh, that is all—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

MICHAL. There, laugh again; is it ridiculous
To be in love? Why, all the girls are in it.

AHINOAM. Yes, and the boys.—Is it a boy thou lovest?

MICHAL (*surprised*). Why, no, a girl.— (*Both laugh.*)

AHINOAM (*hearing a sigh of relief*).

Thou didst relieve my heart
Of anguish, child;—no, speak to me of him
Whose magic did my daughter thus bewitch;
Give me thy secret's other half, now that
The half thereof I know.—A Benjamite?—

MICHAL. The comeliest of Judah's youth is he
Who dreams not of my madness for his heart's
Response, a raving hunger thus unfed
By hope is mine; I love unloved; if this
Sufficient be for thee to know, thou hast
It all.

AHINOAM. A youth of Judah,—how did he come
To thwart thy footway, girl?

MICHAL. We thwarted his
When I with Jonathan his tribe's domain
Did traverse and near Bethlehem did halt
To feed our caravan. The sun's decline

Soft radiance sent in mellow streams and with
 His crimsoned glories flooded earth and sky ;
 Soft bounded from its spring the crystal brook ;
 Soft in the leafage chirp'd and warbled many
 A bird, while overhead in mid-air poured
 His cadence forth the winged musician who
 In azure sings ; but softer, sweeter than
 All melody flowed from a distance song
 So mighty and so weird that thitherward
 Resistless drawn with Jonathan I moved.
 There, at a limpid fount a youth, a harp
 In hand, a wreath as headgear wearing, armed
 With bow and quiver, like an angel sate
 Amid a numerous flock of scattered sheep,
 His eyes in ether lost, his fingers on
 The chords disporting, adding sweetness to
 A voice, itself a thrilling symphony.
 " Disturb we not the youth who praises God,"
 Said Jonathan, withdrawing with my hand
 In his, the singer's image graven in
 My soul for aye.

AHINOAM. A youth so gifted would
 Our King delight : we should know more of him.

MICHAEL. If Jonathan had seen him with mine eyes .
 He would no effort spare to draw him hither.

AHINOAM. That Jonathan thereafter took no thought
 Of him I wonder much :—poor boy, too close
 The battles and the hazards followed, grave
 Enough to load a leader's memory.—
 Thy secret guarding I will prompt him to
 Inform himself about the youth we ought
 To know.—I see in self-discourse the king. (*Exeunt.*)

SAUL. (*who enters from the opposite door*).
 If man be nothing but a plaything in
 The hands of a mysterious Destiny
 Then better for him never to be born
 Than drink the bitter goblet mixed for him
 By creatures meaner than himself.—Sweet Hope
 Wilt thou desert me with thy magic sights,

Thy golden vistas precious to the heart?
How meet Vexation with her thousand shafts?
Be hurt, tormented, and continue sane?
The last was I to covet royalty,
As now the last to give it up unfought;
Once crownèd I am King till death relieves
Me of my glittering agony.—Oh, that
The silent heavens are so high and God
Above, indifferent to a myriad woes
And throes, methinks, man's tragedy below
Unrolls! The brute for slaughter marked, who tells
Me that, like man, it knoweth not its doom?
What makes me think I am a victim born?
A scapegoat marked to answer some design?
Suspicion, press not on my brain this thought
That warps the brighter quality of the mind.

(*Enter Jonathan.*)

What is it, son, that makes thy look so grave?

JONATHAN. Philistia is out in insolence
Upon Azekah's hills, and Abner asks
Assistance ere it be too late. Shall we
Judean territory enter and re—
Enforcement hurry to the seat of war?
We cannot waste an hour, much less a day
Without advantaging our adversaries.

SAUL. Send forth thy troops and I the rear shall with
My bodyguard take up, if Abner danger sees.

JONATHAN. Full twenty thousand strong, and fortified,
They on our fear their hopeful prospects ground
To meet in single combat huge Goliath
Of prodigious strength, their champion,
A tower clad in armor, balancing
A spear as rafter long and heavy, loud,
Foul-mouthed in challenge to encounter him
And conquer or be conquered, enslave
Or be enthralled. This troubles Abner much,
Our camp embracing none the giant to
Confront with fair success.

SAUL. The worse for us
If he can unopposed defy our men.
He must be met and beaten, and the one —
Let this be far proclaimed—who smites him dead,
The fairest of our home, our Michal, shall,
Endowed with royal state, receive as wife. (*Ereunt.*)

The worse for us

If he can unopposed defy our men.

He must be met and beaten, and the one —

Let this be far proclaimed—who smites him dead,

The fairest of our home, our Michal, shall,

Endowed with royal state, receive as wife. (Exeunt.)

SCENE II.—BETHLEHEM.* HOUSE OF JESSE.

JESSE (*who enters with Samuel's Messenger*).

As he commands we shall his coming here

Keep secret, honored as I am and proud

To bless the prophet and be blessed by him.

MESSENGER. Have all thy sons assembled for his view,

He having purpose to behold them all ;

He was emphatic when he charged me thus.

JESSE. The man of God shall have in all his will :—

Shall I proceed to meet him on the highway?

MESSENGER. I hurried to announce his coming, who

Enjoined me to bear his message while

He stopp'd to pray. Thou mayst expect to face

Him in a moment. Lo! here —

(Enter Samuel. Exit Messenger.)

JESSE (*bowing reverently*). This house be thine

Great man of God, and all therein are at

Thy service, happy to be blessed by thee.

SAMUEL. Eight sons are thine of whom I seven saw

Without, the one I seek I found not there.

Let him appear that I God's bidding do.

JESSE. The youngest of my house is with our flocks.

And has been sent for to be here at once.

SAMUEL. The favored he of the Most High, who will

His glory shed on him and his to come.—

(*Enter David.*)

Come, son, the Grace of God descends on thee;
Be strong in trial, humble in success;
Thou art the King to reign by Heaven's decree,
Thy arm be steel, thy nature gentleness.

(*Pours oil on David's head.*)

Rule Israel, forever live thy name,
Thy house endure in memory for aye,
Thy song's delight immortalize thy fame,
Thy sovereign might be spiritual sway.
Write this in flaming letters on thy heart:
God graces them who humbly pray for grace,
The sceptre shall not from thy house depart,
Thine be the kingdom of the chosen race.

SCENE III.—SAUL'S ENCAMPMENT. A TENT.

(*Enter Saul and Jonathan.*)

SAUL. Who should have thought that with such promises
Held out among twelve thousand warriors there
Would be no man to strike for love or fame
That blasphemous Philistine; in all a host
No man to risk his life for such a prize!

JONATHAN. Yet generous be thy judgment over men
Than whom there breathe not braver fighters in
The kingdoms we are combating; but when
A monstrous villain of enormous limb
And muscle, fit for Samson's iron grip,
Does challenge usual warriors to sure
Defeat, it were unwise, yea, mad, to rush
Into his arms and be undone; I doubt
Not that our hero will appear to do
The wonder of the day.

SAUL. Ah! if he come,
And be victorious, Jonathan, dost thou
Believe a Hebrew could that heathen smite?

The Samsons lived in bygone times, I fear :
We must on lesser prodigies rely.

JONATHAN. The Godsend and inspired, be he big
Or small, will light on him as thunder from
The cloud and cleave his massive bulk in twain.

SAUL. That were the man to wed my daughter, boy :
But Samuel's spirit is against us, come
What may,—against our cause.

JONATHAN. What is our cause—
That is not his, who for the common weal
Anointed thee, rejecting his own, because
Unworthy to succeed their sire?

SAUL. He spoke
The fatal word that disinherits thee
And me makes puppet of a flimsy show.

JONATHAN. Be this thy lesser grief that I my name
Shall not have graven in the book of kings;
Grant God that glorious deeds thy rule adorn!

SAUL (*gloomy*). Grant God that evil spirits enter not
My head, for horrid are the nightmares which
My pillow turn into a haunt of ghouls,
The hideous dreams unhinging what is sound
And sane in mind and heart.—His angry eyes,
Yea, Samuel's eyes, they pierce me day and night
Since last at Gilgal I their fire stood,
Not as a monarch crown'd with victory.
But stung and humbled, lowered, lowered, deep.
And buried, disenthroned, unkinged, disgraced,
Because his hest was in the letter slighted!
O Disappointment, bitter are thy dregs,
Unbearable when mixed with grim Despair!
For man in memory lives and works in hope
To see the harvest of his seed in days
To come; but from my hand a ruthless fate
The wreath and palm of fame has torn: down went
Amalek, down with him his victor goes!— —

JONATHAN (*looking toward the entrance*).
News on the wing, with Abner flying and
Another one I know not by his side.

(*Enter Abner and David.*)

SAUL. Give up thy tidings, marshal, good or bad.

ABNER. In earnest neither of this, my lord, for now
As hitherto these forty days foul-mouthed
Goliath unpunished heaps abuse on thy
Enduring army, none, except this youth,
Proposing to avenge the infamy
We unrevengeful take.

SAUL. What? this youth make
Our shield, an army standing idle and
Unwounded in their pride? I should not have
Philistia laugh at us.—(*To David.*) Whoever thou,
Courageous youth, it is a giant who
Will hurl thee whirling thro' the atmosphere.

DAVID. My boldness pardon, sovereign liege, but were
He thrice his volume, armed in steel, with sword
And spear as sharp and venomous as tooth
Of serpent, it would concern me little and
Avail him less, who shall be struck before
He knoweth how; I scorn the Philistine.—

SAUL. And who art thou, brave youth, and where thy home?

DAVID. At Bethlehem in Judah Jesse dwells,
My aged sire, whom eight sons relieve
Of toil; of them the youngest I, my liege.
Long years in Judah's mountainous regions I
Was guardian of our flocks, and were I vain,
I could a lion's head as trophy wear
And add the bear's, whom single-handed I
Destroyed, tho' less for warfare fashioned than
Poetic song with soft accompaniment
Of harp or lute. But when that cursing cur
I heard the sacred congregation taunt,
I felt that naught betwixt his downfall stands
And me but thy permission to insure
His overthrow.

JONATHAN (*aside*). He is the one we heard
Once sing and play in Judah's vale.

ABNER.

Give him

Thy sanction king, to test his valor's edge.

SAUL. Go forth, my son, in this my armor clad,
And this my sword around thee girt, lest he
Find thee too vulnerable in shepherd's garb.

(Offers him an armor.)

DAVID. Unused, my liege, to wear a coat of mail,
In lieu of arming me, it will impede
My swiftness, which I count on in the fray :
The sling that in my hand did seldom miss
Its aim will not untrustful prove this time.
Be he as lion strong Goliath shall
Go down this day.

SAUL. Come, let us watch the youth
And have our forces ready for a move.

JONATHAN. Thou hast no weapon to ward off a blow,
O child of Judah, Goliath is all armor.—

DAVID. Yes, prince, and Israel's God omnipotent. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE IV.—A VALLEY BETWEEN THE TWO CAMPS.

GOLIATH *(enters in panoply)*.

I am Goliath, and this spear,
The heaviest beam a warrior saw,
Herewith I balance like a straw
To strike the Hebrews dumb with fear ;
Confounded at my sight they fly—
Ye dastard slaves, my challenge take,
Give me your stoutest neck to break,
A Samson give me to defy ;
In twain I'll split him with my brand,
His fall or mine this broil shall end—
Ye freemen ? slaves, it is a lie !
Philistia has forged your chain,
I treat you, cowards, with disdain,

YOU shrink in silence, I know why.
By Dagon's holy head I swear
That if I fall ye shall be free,
Our masters you, your servants we ;
But if I slay him who will dare
To meet me fighting fair and square ?
Yours be the yoke forever tight ;
As beasts of burden ye shall brave
The toil and scourging of the slave.
Send forth a man, a man to fight !
Ah, Israelites, and chosen, too !
Ye leprous brood begot of thieves,
I scorn your wizards, loathe your chiefs,
Your God is false, our Dagon true.
Come, bloated bellies, I will rip
And disembowel a score at once,
Bark, howl or cackle in response,
Come and be smothered by this grip.—
But, holy Dagon, what is that ?
With stick and bag,—the shepherd's gear,—
A dwarf to wriggle on my spear,
As quick as mouse, as fierce as rat.

(Enter David.)

Ha, ha, ha, ha ! what is it boy
Thou wouldst discover hereabout ?
What fury, Dagon ! spit it out ;
The nurse, the nurse—am I a toy ?

DAVID. Thy death, thy death, foul heathen hear,
Death follows me, Almighty's will
On thee, base villain, to fulfill ;
Cease cursing, dog, thy death is near.

GOLIATH. Death, short-legg'd puppy, follows thee,
That by this trusty sword I may
Divide thy corpse for beasts of prey :
Or will thy shabby panoply
Defend thee, armed with a rod ?
Hush, fly hence, dwarf, and be not loud,
Or I will hurl thee to the cloud
And scare the vanguard of thy God.

DAVID. Thy tongue shall wither, filthy swine,
Whose boast is bulk of flesh and bone ;
My strength is Jah, the Only One,
Whose hosts throughout the heavens shine ;
The sea congealed before His Breath,
At His command the Jordan fled,
With manna He our sires fed,
He fights our battles, sealed thy death.—
Vile heathen, tremble at this hour,
Before God's Ark thy Dagon fell,
With him thy soul descends to hell,
Hyenas shall thy flesh devour.

(Goliath aims a thrust at David, which he evades, draws a stone from his bag, flings it at the Philistine's head, who falls on his face, whereupon David rushes at him, tears the sword from his side, beheads him and carries off the trophies. A great shout of joy is heard, followed by a cry : " They fly, they fly, pursue the Philistines !" Hebrew troops rush across the valley headed by Abner, Jonathan, Doeg and Saul.)

SCENE V.—GIBEAH. A STREET. CITIZENS.

FIRST CITIZEN. They are all flocking to the gates to see
The king and army march into the place,
But stiffened limbs advise me that I wait
Until they come this way.

SECOND CITIZEN. They say the girls
Are out to welcome them with dance and song ;
The damsels will precede them hither dancing.

THIRD CITIZEN. 'Tis here the girls will gather to receive
Our soldiers crowned with victory ; sure, sure,
The Philistines have got it hot and heavy.

FOURTH CITIZEN.
Hush, hush ! *our soldiers crowned with victory*—
The merit is they sought the back of those
Who ran ; it is that youth has done it all ;
He must be mighty plucky, he—

FIRST CITIZEN.

For sure,

It needed more than sneezing to undo
That giant beast who cursèd King and host.

SECOND CITIZEN. Our big-ones held aloof, 'twas too much fun.

THIRD CITIZEN. That little one will be the son-in-law
Of Saul, whatever be his pedigree.

FOURTH CITIZEN. Pah, pedigree, he is a lion's cub,
A son of Judah's lusty tribe and as
A Hebrew claims his title rooted in
The blood and story of the stiff-necked race.
Our kinship dates from Abraham's household, thence
Unbroken till this day, cemented even
By thousand faults and follies common to
The stock that, heavenly choice advancing, errs.

SECOND CITIZEN. Why, yes, did we not all in common do
Some good and evil things?

FIRST CITIZEN. Ay, ay, some good
And evil things, and of the evil more
Than of the good we did, yea, all of us:
The prophet's view thereof is mine; we are
So mad to ape their fooleries whom Israel
Should lead, that were the pagans in a fit
Of crazy wantonness to mutilate
Their ears, or crop their noses, hang me, if
Of twenty Hebrews five would be unclipped.

SECOND CITIZEN. ONE, *one*, say, *one*: grim Moloch's patronage
Among us bears me out in this.

THIRD CITIZEN. If we
Be such a pack, why not a Noah's flood
Invoke to drown us, worthless puppies?—Tush! tush!
The angels make no golden calf, nor cry
For meat, or swear at obstacles, because
They get no chance to run astray, nor have
An appetite for aught Temptation shows
To wake a tenfold passion in man's heart.
Then answer this: The good are poor, the bad
Are rich; the wicked rule, the pious suffer;
The cripples live, the stately die: why?—See,

This makes one doubtful as to matters here,
Indifferent as to consequence hereafter.

FIRST CITIZEN. Thou art not wise to question thus a Power
We may well dream of, never comprehend ;
If God to our conception open were
He were too small to rule or be adored.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Make room, make room, the damsels and the King——
(*Enter damsels, instruments in hand, dancing and singing.*)

Joy throughout Jeshurun ring,
Scattered lies the tyrant's host,
Sing Jeshurun of thy King!
King and hero claim the deed,
King and hero laureled come,
Saul did strike the thousands dumb,
David made the myriads bleed.

(*Exit damsels, troops pass, led by Jonathan in company of
David and Abner, followed by Saul's bodyguard and Doeg.*)

SAUL (*remaining with Doeg*). Doeg—

DOEG. Thy Majesty—

SAUL. Did I hear right?—

DOEG. What does Thy Majesty refer to?

SAUL. What?

Fool, what? I am not deaf, art thou?

DOEG. My liege—

SAUL. Dumb head,—thy ears—it is no dream, no, no!

The wenches said it, sung it, sing it as

They pass along the highway, gall, gall, gall!

“Saul did strike the thousands dumb,
David made the myriads bleed!”—(*To Doeg.*)

Didst thou not hear it?

DOEG. Sure, I did, my liege.

SAUL. It is a lie, it is a lie—my head— (*Touches his forehead.*)

It is a lie!—Go, have my coach prepared.—(*Exit Doeg.*)

That was the ring of doom, the death-knell of

The House of Saul; he is the coming man,
 The better man, my kingdom's heir; none else
 But Jesse's son. Oh, that I cannot hate
 And rave more than I do.—Grim Destiny,
 Why call thee Providence, when things go wrong,
 Go queer, go strange, go mad, run riot here
 Below, where beast does feed on beast and man
 On man! (*laughs wildly*) Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
 Goliath, Goliath, live again Goliath!
 Less hateful to my sight than that red-cheeked,
 Unspeakable executioner.—Who is he?
 The moon eclipse the sun? a slave usurp
 A throne? If Samuel be for him—venom!
 The nation's hero, who *made the myriads bleed*,
 What stands between him and the kingdom's crown?
 What? Saul shall rise in manly majesty
 Unconquered till this heart, uprooted, cease
 To throb; no, not unfought shall he my throne
 Ascend! The son of Jesse—meseems the owls
 Are howling *son of Jesse*. Small thing, yet big
 And deathful as a drop of poison in
 The body coursing to the red roots of
 The vital seat.—My reason is untuned;
 I burn as tho' a rotten swamp had all
 Its deadly fevers lodged in me, that Pest
 A centre have, delirium find a home.—
 Where Sodom and Gomorrah buried lie
 The sea is dead, its exhalations foul,
 The cloud thereof him maddens, who its shore
 His bed makes for a night; what maddens me?
 Saul, be not mad—my throne,—my head, my head—

(*He is on the point of sinking when Jonathan rushes in to catch
 his fall. The curtain falls.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—HOUSE OF SAUL. A ROOM.

(David and Michal.)

MICHAL. He will not slight his promise, now that thou
Hast bravely thine redeemed, destroying thrice
Their number whose defeat should make me wife
To thee, beloved. It was a whim of his
And thou hast gratified a gloomy King.

DAVID. May thy prophetic spirit truer prove
Than mine, O precious girl, whom I by right
Of love and conquest claim. How oft did I
Not set my life at naught that I possess
Thee, dearer to me than thy father's crown?
Thy inspiration, dearest, braced my arm,
That slew the giant Philistine; since then
No expedition failed entrusted me.
Yet in acknowledgment thy father gives
Me hollow promises and hollow looks,
Tho' him I serve, revere and love but less
Than thee, the focus of my blissful dreams.

MICHAL. Oh, dear, believe me thy impatience is
Of mine the smallest half, so do I burn
To be in thy possession unreclaimed.
Yet wait another change of moon; bright hours
May on my father dawn, who should our love's
Profoundest pity move; thou knowest well
His heart, alas! King Saul is not himself
Of late, all drownèd in his thickening night.

DAVID. Am I not here his melancholy to
Dispel by harp and voice? And, lest my chance
Be scarce to meet my soul's adored, I will
Not pray that Saul to cheer return too soon.

MICHAL. How cruel, naughty minstrel ! David, comes
It from thy heart ?

DAVID. Wouldst thou be happy if
I loved thee less ?

MICHAL. No, love me more, if room
Be in thy heart unfilled, let love prevail.

DAVID. There is no more of David, sweetest, than
The love he bears thee unrestrained ; the rest
Of him is worth its weight in useless dross.

MICHAL. Ah ! thine the word to utter forth thy heart,
While I, with flow of speech ungifted, must
My feelings leave unuttered, as for years
I buried them unquenched in smouldering flame.

DAVID. For *years* ? how stands it with thy count, my girl ?
Would *months* not nearer come reality ?

MICHAL. No, years, years, years ; the shepherd boy I loved
Not less than I the famous captain love ;
I then thy shadow worship'd, not thyself.

DAVID (*drawing her hand to his heart*).
Ah, Jonathan hath told me how my song
Had drawn you thro' the thicket where I sate
Unconscious of Intrusion's curious eye.
I sung of angels and a cherub came
To bless me with a grace benign, and earth
Make heaven in all that shapes felicity.
If balance could affection weigh, or space
Give yearning measurement, I have in moons
Thy cravings of long years requited full.

MICHAL. How deep, how great, how brave, how noble thou,
And I untutored, risen to a title by
No merit, thee to own ! How wonderful
Is love ! And, idol of my heart, did not
Love's Muse to thee her sacred seat reveal ?

DAVID (*strikes the harp*).
In heaven there blossoms a fruit-bearing tree
Whose roots are as flowery and green as its crown,
The fountains that water it send forth in glee
A river, man's anguish and sorrows to drown ;

Fresh in its fair branches the zephyrs take rise
Whence hope flows and rapture in unseen streams ;
The cherub, the seraph, they reach in the skies,
Who earthward waft ever ethereal dreams ;
Immortal its leafage, unfading its flower,
The choicest of wonders it bears in God's grove,
Its fruit taste the lovers who mate in a bower,
We taste it, sweet maiden, thence radiates our love.
(She falls in his arms. Enter Jonathan.)

JONATHAN. Now, now, look out, brave minstrel—Michal, what
Is this ? and wherefore thus ? *(Exit Michal.)*

DAVID. Thou ? Jonathan—

JONATHAN. I, Jonathan ?—be glad that I am he
And she is she, else—very well, I see
It is all settled as to thee and her.

DAVID. And ought to be so as to everyone ;
I hold thy father's promise unfulfilled ;
Thy sister loves me and is loved, what more ?

JONATHAN. My trouble is that I thy troubles share
Too willing and no remedy can offer ;
It will be thou, however, David, thou
In all ; a little patience have and wait.

DAVID. And wait ! I do, reluctant, I confess ;
Nor would another time I be deceived,
If I delay can hinder for my best.

JONATHAN. My father has his ways and whims and moods,
And in this state I find it waste of breath
To reason Melancholy out of him ;
Thy harp can do it readier than thy friend.

DAVID. The spell is broken, if I judge him well ;
Meseems my strings affect him less and less,
While in his presence I uneasy feel,
Who eyes me with a scorpion in his look.

JONATHAN. Art thou unerring in thy inference ?

DAVID. His actions undeceive me, Jonathan :
There brews in him a something that forebodes

No good for me, I am afraid, despite
Of services I rendered at a risk
Your Abners would not run. Indeed, indeed,
He treats me not like those he loves and honors.
Suspicion on his forehead brooding hovers,
And of his hatred I appear the butt.

JONATHAN. Conjecture, nothing but conjecture is
Thy fancy's food ; my father is at war
With self and all the world, thyself within
Its bounds, and everyone who smiles, as tho'
In mockery of his dim unhappiness.
If danger threaten thee will Jonathan
Be far or lukewarm in his love to stand
By him he of a people chose his friend?
Be unalarmed, Michal and myself
Have eyes and ears, and in thy hand the key
Is to our hearts. Begone, there comes the king ;
Let us be hereabout—he is alone.
(Exeunt Jonathan and David.)

SAUL *(entering gloomily)*.

If murder be a crime, who put in us
The passion that in Tophet revels? and why
Is Youth, yea, Infancy nipped in the bud?
So was I born unasked, unasking what
I should or should not be ; had I been asked
And shown futurity, I should have prayed
To be the dust of dust, the slime of streams,
The mud of slums, a stone, a tree, a nothing
Rather than a creature with a heart that aches,
That bleeds, that sighs, longs, feels, and hates, and plans
Forbidden things.—Forbidden things? what is
Forbidden to a man who, drowning, on
A straw lays hold the current brings adrift?
The son of Jesse is the straw I would
Submerge to save my house ; but all the steel
This earth containeth forgèd into arms
Cannot a bubble under water longer hold
Than Nature's adamant law would have it.
Him Samuel favors, I suspect, and him

Another goblin conjure for my brain
As lodging, let this javelin find a bed
In Jesse's treacherous brood.

(He hurls the javelin ; David escapes.)

I missed my aim—

He fled unhurt, and I red-handed stand—
A mad assassin.—It is he the whim
Of Destiny has chosen my tormentor ;
Had any girl a steel sent at my breast
An evil spirit buried to the hilt
Therein the weapon : ever true, mine eye
This once was cheated of the hateful mark,
Because the fiends are all in league against
The house of Saul.—Well, now ? he is not slain ?
The son of Jesse, is he dead ? *(Enter Jonathan.)*

JONATHAN. Thank heaven
He is unhurt, tho' wretched we, my lord,
And bleeding from the wound of shame and sorrow.

SAUL *(shaking his head)*.

Ay, shame and sorrow—son, art thou his friend ?

JONATHAN. There were but little left of manhood in
Thy Jonathan were he not David's friend,
Whose matchless prowess shed a glory on
Thy rule, he, the terror of the Philistine.

SAUL *(angry)*. Thou offspring of a stubborn mother, hear
Me, son of blind perverseness ! die he must,
The son of Jesse, or thou wilt live to see
Our house the vulgar level take and he
Assume ascendancy above the sprouts
Of Saul ; it must not be, it shall not be !
To-day, to-morrow, Jesse's whelp must die.

JONATHAN. Forbid it, God, that Murder be thy prop !
Kind Providence decreed it otherwise ;
One of thy issue shall thy sceptre hold,
And this but thy acquiescence needs to be.

SAUL. Give him my daughter ?—

JONATHAN. The best of maidens to
The best of men, and promised long ago.

SAUL. Thou art not sure that Samuel favors him?

JONATHAN. I know on him the prophet's eye is fixed ;
How far his favors go I cannot state.

SAUL. He has the people's sympathy withal,
And thou and Michal scheme to make him safe.

JONATHAN. He is beloved of all, the chivalry
And grace of Judah's tribe, a man of song
And steel, undaunted as the lioness
When after him who carried off her young,
Thus fully worthy of a princely maid.—
Withhold no longer, father, thy consent ;
Make him thy pillar, making him thy child,
Who honors thee and loves as one of thine ;
Let Peace unruffled dwell within our house,
Serene Benignity thy rulings grace,
And may thy reign be long and prosperous.

SAUL (*after a pause*).

The chick is wiser than the hen, such be
The newer course of things ; wherefore I do
Submit, outvoted, as I am and in
My judgment minor stamped.—But say, my boy,
Thy sister's readiness to be his wife,
Art thou thereof assured?

JONATHAN. As hungry babe
For mother's breast, or he for crystal fount,
Who parchèd in the desert wanders, longs
My sister for his life's companionship.

SAUL. Enough, let shrine and altar for the rite
Be decked that will them husband make and wife,
And let the ceremony be undelayed.

JONATHAN (*delighted*). This moon?

SAUL (*significantly*). To-morrow—make it known ; to-morrow.

JONATHAN. Thrice blessed the hour that shines with promise of
Unclouded peace within and strength without.—
(*Exit Jonathan.*)

SAUL. Suspicion led me not astray : he is
The man who, tho' uncrowned, is deeper in

The people's favor rooted than their King,
Who am within the shadow of my walls
Outwitted, isolated by his tricks ;—
My children his in heart and soul, and I
Alone, alone !—It is unwise to let
One's reason go, or have it upside down,
But I am thus impelled beyond control.—
Perish, perish, the son of Jesse perish !
I have him now, I have him safe—Doeg !—
Frown Destiny, I am at odds with thee. (*Enter Doeg.*)

DOEG. My liege—

SAUL. Art thou a man that fears a thing ?

DOEG. A man that fears a thing, is he a man ?

SAUL. Well said, Doeg ; I'll put thee on thy mettle.

DOEG. Be hell or devil in the task, thy hest,
My liege, shall be fulfilled.

SAUL. Now, hear and mark ;
My daughter, Michal, marries Jesse's son
To-morrow.

DOEG. To-morrow !—

SAUL. I mean to mark the day
By an exploit to be remembered long,
And thou shalt in this emprise be my arm.—

DOEG. Thy pleasure's instrument am I ; command.—

SAUL. First, they of Gibeon, who dwell among
Us, shall to-morrow's nuptials not survive.

DOEG. As chaff we sweep them off to-morrow, King.

SAUL. The witches chase, and spare not one to see
To-morrow's eve.

DOEG. They shall be blotted out.

SAUL. Thy crowning work—recoil not from the task
Whose execution I shall with a weight of gold
Reward—his head, possess me of his head ;
I hate the basilisk ;—get me his head.—

DOEG. His head ? whose head, my liege ?

SAUL. Did I not speak
Of Jesse's traitorous offspring?

DOEG (*astonished*). The captain's head?—

SAUL. Its weight in gold be thine.—

DOEG. To-morrow night?

SAUL. The bridal chamber hide his headless trunk.—

DOEG. It means to catch the devil in his den. (*Aside*).—
I wish he were not with his bride when I
Descend on him; the princess will protect him.

SAUL. Tear him from her bosom, and if her heart
Be torn he shall his nuptials rue and bleed! (*Exit Saul*.)

DOEG. It is a madman's charge, who is a king,
And villain tho' I am, and hater of
Old Jacob's progeny, a tiger in
His lair I bearded sooner than that cub
Of Jesse in his bride's embrace. It is
A hawk of iron beak and claws I am
To hug. As for the others Edom's thirst
For sport is roused in me; there be some fun
In this and frolic; I must pick my men. (*Exit*.)

SCENE II.—RAMAII. HOUSE OF SAMUEL.

SAMUEL (*on his death-bed; his sons, with Nathan and Gad*).
My sunset came, with night eternal for
The flesh and light unebbing for the soul;
I had my fill of toil, my fill of years;
Farewell, farewell, my pilgrimage is closed;
Let earth her clay reclaim, the soul soar forth.—
Now, come, sweet mother, angel, Hannah, come
To meet me at the gate.

NATHAN. She will arrive
Whose invocation heard at Shiloh's Fane
Gave Israel thy self, endeared lord.

SAMUEL (*pathetically*).
She wept and vowed: "If thou wilt look on the
Affliction of thy handmaid, and remember
Me"—saintly woman!—"and not forget thy handmaid,

But wilt give to thy handmaid a man-child,
Then will I give him to the Lord forever,
And there shall come no razor on his head."—
Forgive, angelic dame, forgive, if I
In aught offended thee unknowing, thou,
My soul's ethereal inspiration ; Oh,
Descend, await me at the gate !

GAD.

Who shall
Hereafter lead us, master, thou being with
Thy fathers gathered and in heaven's bliss?

SAMUEL (*raising himself inspired*).

The Lord will Judah gird with might,
Jeshurun shall not orphaned be ;
A vision rushes on my sight,
A maze of light and mystery.
Upshoots the sprout of Jesse's line,
The world doth wonder as it grows,
The Voice I heard at Shiloh's Shrine,
Before my gaze a shadow throws,
A shadow creeping over earth
With sorrows fraught and sights of woe,
As woman in her throes of birth,
The tribes shall travail to and fro,
Unpitied by a ruthless race
In error sunk, degraded, blind ;
Dark powers rule, Truth hides her face,
The heart is frozen, dead the mind !
Man worships matter, idols vile,
Old Jacob's House the folly shares,
False prophets Israel's seed beguile,
He sins, he sinks, his guilt he bears ;
But Heaven will Messiah send
To heal mankind, arouse the dead,
The mountains shake, the heavens bend— (*Ecstatic.*)
There she descends Elkanah wed.—
Ah ! angel mother, Samuel yearns
To lay his head upon thy breast,
With thee to God my soul returns—
Oh, kiss me, Lord !—I sleep—I rest— (*Dies*).

NATHAN (*after a pause of grief*).

The King and nation be informed of
Their great bereavement ; Samuel, Samuel—dead !

SCENE III.—HOME OF DAVID. A ROOM.

(*Enter two servants.*)

FIRST SERVANT. We had a good bite this time, had not we ?

SECOND SERVANT. Yes, and a sip that savored well ; merry,
The gulp I had was worth a sea of—what
Shall I say ?—yes, a vintage of thin juice ;
It was a royal banquet all in all ;
The cook has done his best, and so the butler.

FIRST SERVANT. I should say *royal* ; such a heap of good
Things makes one dizzy to behold, and if
A fellow gets a taste thereof, he feels
Like whirling on his toes. (*Dances.*)

SECOND SERVANT. Merry, merry,
The King was jolly, laughed and quaffed ; but
The gossips have their say as well, and I
Heard people whisper things I won't repeat.

FIRST SERVANT. I heard them say it boded evil, that
A raven lighted on the altar while
The priest the sacred wine the bridegroom gave
To taste.

SECOND SERVANT. Prince Jonathan was pale as death,
The black-bird screaming like a demon hoarse
And angry ; that was strange.

FIRST SERVANT. Maybe it was
The evil spirit that torments the King.

SECOND SERVANT. Why not one of the witches slain by Saul's
Command ? Suppose it was a witch, why not ?

FIRST SERVANT. Maybe, maybe ; and what a horrid flock
It were if all the eighty witches killed
Had swarmed croaking o'er the couple's head.

SECOND SERVANT. By Samson's beard, the couple will be here
Before we have their bridal chamber put
In trim ;—there they come cooing, cooing, cooing—

(*Exeunt servants.*)

(*Enter David and bride.*)

MICHAL (*David's arm around her waist*).

The night is dark, yet do I sun and moon
And stars behold ablaze, beloved, so bright
Appears all space and radiant since thy heart
With mine in blissful concord throbs ; it is
A harmony that holds the sum of all
Felicity ; if choice were given me
To pick of all the stars the fairest to
Be mine, or have thee as my lord to serve,
I would exclaim : Let me his handmaid be
Forever, ay, forever.—(*Rests her head on his breast.*)

DAVID. His queen forever,—
Forever ! sweetest ; knowest thou the deep
That word conceals ?

MICHAL (*looking up to him*). If it be deeper than
My love for thee, thy love for me, then let
The sounding lead descend for aye, it can
No bottom strike.

DAVID (*looking tenderly into her eyes*).
My Eden's blessèd cherub,
Forever wedded means two souls on earth
Forever welded into one to be
Forever one hereafter ; such our union.
Thou art my hope's fulfillment, with no wish
Left, vast as is the boundless Universe.
Of God's creations the most precious here
Is virtue's loveliness personified
In gentle womanhood, like sunshine rich,
As moonlight mild, omnipotent as love ;
And lovelier than Beauty clad in Grace ;—
So much art thou to David, maiden blessed.

MICHAL (*attentive*). A hurried, heavy tramp I hear—

DAVID. It is
The wind ; what else at this late hour ?

MICHAL. A man
Is at our entrance—(*Jonathan knocking without*).

JONATHAN. Open, open at once !

DAVID. 'Tis Jonathan—(*Opens the door. Enter Jonathan.*).

JONATHAN (*to David*). Fly, fly! save thy life, or death
Will overtake thee in a trice!

MICHAL (*terrified*). Great God!

DAVID. Who is he I am to evade?

JONATHAN. Their hands

Are reeking with the blood of Massacre—

Get out—Doeg is after thee—get out—

MICHAL (*in great fear*).

Whither? there is one alley leading hence—

JONATHAN. And barred by Murder who is hither bound.—

DAVID (*alarmed*).

Hand me a sword—I am unarmed—a sword!—

JONATHAN. That window pass for open space, I'll bear
Thee company.

(*Exeunt David and Jonathan thro' the window.*)

MICHAL. The raven!—Lord—my husband!

(*Enter Doeg and men.*)

DOEG. Forgive, my princess, but the King must have

His head. (*Enters the next room followed by his men.*)

MICHAL (*in agony*).

The King must have his head! A pit

Of serpents hiss into my ear—the King

Must have his head! (*Re-enter Doeg with men.*)

DOEG. The captain is not home—(*aside*)

I could have caught the bird had I no cause

To give him a wide berth. (*To his men.*) Come, he is gone.

MICHAL (*as before*).

The King must have his head! my love,

My husband! (*to Doeg*) Go, inform the King, that he

My blood may shed instead of his, whom all

The ministers of love and grace protect.

DOEG (*whispers into her ear*).

Thank Doeg, princess, for the captain's life,

Or Jonathan had never got the wind

Of Saul's design.—(*aside*) I'll get my favors thus

Unhurt, and let the maniac yell with rage.

MICHAL (*as before*).

The King must have his head! my husband's head!—

(*The curtain falls.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I.—HOUSE OF SAUL.

SAUL (*to Doeg*). Whoever treats my enemy as friend
I treat as enemy, is this correct?

DOEG. Most proper, King.

SAUL. The son of Jesse is
An outlaw doomed to perish if within
My kingdom's reaches found sojourning, and
A priest, who fealty owes my throne, and loans
Him weapons in defiance of my will,
Is he my friend?

DOEG. Thy enemy, my liege.

SAUL. How did the priests of Nob the outlaw treat?

DOEG. With hearty welcome and an open hand;
The Tabernacle's consecrated breads
They offered him, and added thereunto
The sword Goliath bore when overcome.

SAUL (*wrathful*). Let there be headless priests in Nob and blood
And wailing, even as speedy as thy hand
May strike the treacherous nest. Wipe out that pack
Of hypocrites, that all who hear thereof
May tremble at the vengeance of my wrath.
Proceed at once, while I with Abner will
The outlaw give the chase.

DOEG. It shall be done. (*Exit Doeg.*)

SAUL. Samuel, Samuel, of thy seed this harvest springs;
Thou art no more in flesh, yet of thy ghost
I see the scowling visage dark and pale,
The eye inflamed with ire, white the lip,
The eyebrows ruffled, ruffled beard and lock.
Thy warning comes too late; I bear thy curse
And would this world in blood submerge, could I

A gory deluge conjure to efface
 Mankind created to enshrine a hell
 Of torture in a flimsy cell that holds
 A burning heart, an anguished brain. Madness,
 Madness endures unmurmuring the stings
 And onslaughts of inexorable Fate.—
 Cut off my life, inscrutable Destiny,
 Why piecemeal tear my soul unguilty once
 As child's, now smirch'd with gore, devoid
 Of peace, the haunt of evil things? Why not
 A friendly arrow let transpierce this breast
 So that therein the smouldering crater find
 An outlet and expire? The day I hate
 And fear the night's approach when Lilith like
 Medusa frowns, the witches *Murder!* howl
 Into my ear, with angered Samuel in
 The background lurking, ever piercing me
 With eyes that goggle from the grave.—
 Wizard, has death no power over thee
 That thus thy image soars before my gaze?
 Avaunt, grim eyes! The desert's lion send
 Me to encounter, not that bleached face!—
 Who there? unfilial Jonathan, what comes?

(Enter Jonathan.)

JONATHAN. The people's lamentation rends the air
 Since Rumor charges thee with sending Death
 To Nob's devoted brotherhood; if it be true.—

SAUL. If thou beest Jonathan thy mother's blood
 Has made thee pigeon-hearted, sired tho'
 Thou art of an indomitable man.—
 Say, shall the son of Jesse live?

JONATHAN. Why fell
 The tree that bore thy kingdom golden fruit?

SAUL. That bore the plagues of Egypt for my house.—
 Oh, my despondency! my children dig
 My grave and I am for their welfare bleeding.—*(In a rage.)*
 Preposterous brood, thy life is mine, thy heart
 Is false, let me transfix it.

(Throws his javelin at Jonathan.)

JONATHAN (*calm*). Strike again ;
The falchion missed the heart that throbs and weeps
For thee ; ay, pierce it, I am loath to live.
(*Offers his breast.*)

SAUL. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ! I am mad ; I
Am mad. The son of Jesse is alive. (*Exit Saul.*)

JONATHAN. Yea, thy senses are unfixed, ill-fated soul
And things move out of joint, slow and sure.

MICHAL (*rushing in*).
Great God, my husband, Jonathan, my husband !

JONATHAN. What stirs thy fear, unless thy tidings be
Alarming, which I know not of.

MICHAL. His life— —

JONATHAN. And mine are one, and please it Heaven that Saul's
Derangement pass as David's life is safe !

MICHAL. If his retreat be traced who will between
His heart and father's dagger place a shield ?

JONATHAN. He who the fire-pillar placed between
The Hebrew slave and Pharaoh's mighty host.

MICHAL. Ah, me ! if on a miracle his life
Depend, then bury me before I know
Him dead.

JONATHAN. Unreasonable wench, thy lord
Needs less our sympathy than doth our sire,
Who in his morbid moods estranges, one
By one, the loyal tribes who round him rallied.
Thy husband has a following and wields
A sword with such dexterity and might
As would a score of lesser warriors blast ;
Nor shall the swiftest wind outspeed my haste
To ward off danger from the man I chose
Of all the idol of my inner self,
Because of all the noblest he I met,
And worth a kingdom, which is his by grace
Divine, I know, and yield ungrudging what
The Highest Will ordained. This knowledge drives
Our father mad, who wades in blood to mar
A rule that has been blessed many times.

MICHAL. Thy step be winged that bears the warning him
In hiding now and hunted by a band
Of spies, with Saul and Abner after him.—
Go, it means life or death to him and me.

JONATHAN. He is as safe as I am sane and Saul
Distracted and unjust; alas! that Reason,
Disenthroned and dimmed, forever bides
In dark! How will it end? The Philistine
Is up and swarming, a bloody purpose in
His bustle showing, while out of sense the Lord's
Anointed slays his priests and meditates
Destruction for the only arm the foe
Has cause to dread!

MICHAL (*folding her hands*). Alas!— —

JONATHAN. Yea, weep and pray
That things wind up in brighter fashion than
I apprehend they will.

MICHAL (*impatient*). I stand on glowing coal;
Five thousand swords are up to slay my love!

JONATHAN. Within five hours my charger carries me
To David in the thicket hidden, where
He preconcerted waits to hear from us.

MICHAL. Then hurry, lest thou come too late.

JONATHAN. Too late!
Too late—it is a fearful sound—too late. (*Exit Jonathan.*)

MICHAL. (*Looking after him*).
Thou art a better man than I a woman
Whose newer bond of love all previous bonds
Dissolved; my husband claims my heart entire,
My father pity grudgingly bestowed;
For dim as are his wits he fully knows
The schemings of his mind, which are unholy,
As tested by atrocious executions;
It is a madness rooted in conceit
That would the sun make change his course and of
The moon illumination borrow; a King
Is but a man, and often not too wise. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II.—WILDERNESS OF ZIPH.

(*Enter David and Joab.*)

DAVID. Have pickets on the outlook for the prince,
Who shall be hither pointed, while patrols
An eye have on all passers-by ; the spy
Make his temerity regret, else harm
No person thwarting us by chance.

JOAB. It shall
Go hard with him who ferrets our retreat.
Now, who is that, by Dagon's broken nose?—

(*Enter Abiathar.*)

DAVID. Abiathar, sackcloth as thy robe, wherefore?
Five days ago they welcomed me, thy kith
And kin, all happy then ; what happened since?— — .

ABIATHAR. My kith and kin are better bedded than
Myself, who live to howl their dirge, alone
Of eighty-five, God's ministers, to tell
Thee, son of Jesse, they who did befriend
Thee murdered lay, unburied when I fled.

DAVID. Forbid it, Lord of Grace, that of a priest
I learn a fabled tale, or truth unheard
Of hitherto in Israel's wide domain ;—
Confirm, Abiathar, what I dread to think
Of—Murder in revenge for kindness shown?—

ABIATHAR. A slaughter, ruthless as of savage beasts,
With one fell swoop removed old Ahimelech
And all within the Tabernacle found,
Four score and five of ministers, beside
The habitants of Nob, the dame and babe
Massacred like the rest of men and brute.

JOAB. It freezes me around the heart.—

DAVID. Meseems
I hear the bittern's hollow scream, and all
The goblins clamor—*black, black, black!*—Give me
Thereof the fuller circumstance, Abiathar.

ABIATHAR. In brief or full, the King's inveterate spy
Saw us at Nob thy hunger serve and want
Of arms, reported this as treason to

His maddened Majesty, whose verdict and
Its sequel I have told ; why was I spared ?—

JOAB. That Idumean's flesh should feed the dogs.

DAVID. Curse not the wolf a crazy shepherd puts
Into his fold ; it is a monstrous deed
Of horrid innocence we dread as we
The tiger shun who thirsts for blood unknowing.—
If outlawed hospitality avail
Thee, child of woe, be one of us, Abiathar.

ABIATHAR. Give me a sword, and place me where I may
My father's murderer in deathful strife
Encounter ; captain, pray, give me a sword !

DAVID. Thy priesthood be thy panoply, my friend ;
Thy prayer help, thy rank inspire us ;
Let Retribution take her devious course.

A VOICE (*without*). The prince.

(*Exeunt Joab and Abiathar. Enter Jonathan.*)

DAVID (*after an embrace*). Say nothing, for thy news is old ;—
How is my wedded girl ?

JONATHAN. As well as love
Unfed, as river running dry for want
Of rain ; she is not for the present thine,
Not thine perchance for many moons to come.

DAVID. Say *years*, a future barren of all joy.

JONATHAN. Let not thy voice bear witness to a flaw
That is not part of thee—Ingratitude ;
Who is of Heaven favored more than thou ?

DAVID. An outlaw, Death and Hatred at my heel—

JONATHAN. Not half as bad as being prince, to crave
The outlaw's friendship as a precious boon.

DAVID. Correct me, Jonathan, who art in sense
And sentiment my paragon, a prince
In royalty of heart, unlike myself
Who am in selfish grievance all absorbed.

JONATHAN. And I in thee my image would see mirrored,
The greater and the deeper thou ; no, let
The heart the tongue inspire, articulate

The soul, confirm the deed, and speak the eye,
Truth being many-tongued and plain. As tho'
Thou wert of maiden loveliness the charm,
Infatuation wove a dream of what
The world in man calls beautiful, divine,
And perfect, and thereon thy likeness stamped
An idol, an ideal Jonathan
Adores, Self-preservation yielding to
The spell which in me threatens Nature's tie
To loosen, child and parent binding as
Creation and the sacred canon bid ;
I love my sister more since thou of her
Art loved, thou being foremost in the heart.

D VID (*grasping Jonathan's hand*).

And I could sing and play and weep my love
To thee, my Jonathan, my Jonathan !
Should Heaven spare me His great purpose to
Fulfill, whatever be my state, thou shalt
Thereof be arbiter and master.

JONATHAN.

Whereof

Thou wilt be lord, I shall be pleased to be
Thy next in rank.

DAVID.

No, thou shalt be the first.

JONATHAN.

Enough if I the next be in thy rule,
Who destined art to fill my sire's throne,
O David, torn hereafter from our house.—
Look not surprised ; with Saul our glory fades.—
Now, as the hour is come for us to part,
The Lord our witness be this day, that we
Henceforth be wedded heart to heart, in life,
In death, thy seed and mine forever ; swear,
Thy hand in mine, that as the rainbow shines
For aye, a covenant between the Lord and man,
So stand irrevocable our friendship's bond
We herewith seal in face of heaven and earth.

DAVID (*embracing Jonathan*).

So be it, and so help us God Almighty.

(*Exeunt after embraces.*)

SCENE III.—ENGEDI, BEFORE A TENT.

(*Enter Saul, Doeg and Attendants.*)

SAUL (*exeunt attendants*).

We left no rock nor cleft unscored in search
Of Jesse's outlaw who escapes our grasp
And mocks our spying scouts ; conspiracy
Assists him, else how could he thus escape ?

DOEG. No doubt, my liege, some people stand by him.

SAUL. They would not stand if I their mind could read,
But Oh, no throne confers the wizard's eye !—
The skies are darkening, and if the clouds discharge
On us the load they bear our tent will need
A ship to be her sail. (*Thunder and lightning.*)

DOEG. The thundercloud
Is rushing past our heads, your Majesty.

SAUL. It will not pass unbroken o'er my head,
Unless it hath no thunderbolt to spare.

DOEG. I know a subterraneous refuge, if
My liege be pleased—

SAUL. What ? underground a hole ?

DOEG. Ay, my liege, but large enough for thousand men
To meet as many Philistines in feud.

(*Thunder and lightning.*)

SAUL. Go have a berth for me who need some rest. (*Exit Doeg.*)
Yea, wear thy grimpest visage, Nature, that
There be no jar betwixt thy outer and
My inner world. O Lord, Thy thunders loan
Me for a day that I the graveyard's peace
May spread and let Annihilation rule.
I am the crazy Saul because, encaged
And stung, I strike my head against the bars.
A billion lunatics who vegetate
And perish like the dog and cat, as dog
And cat the shadow dread of things unknown,
Discourse of free-will, sovereignty and choice,

When every grain of sand their potency
Derides, and every coffin clamors: Fool!

(Thunder and lightning.)

Fool, count thy heart's pulsations; fool, drink of
The spring, the stream which, gathering underneath,
A myriad rotten skeletons did soak,
Then came to light to cool thy greedy maw,
Then laugh, ay, laugh! It is the thoughtlessness
And not the thought that makes flesh happiest here.—
The tempest sobers me of insane thought.—

(Looking skyward.)

Majestic element, mysterious night,
How free, how grand that frowning brow of thine!
What worms are we, who grope and fade in night,
Lord, send me death, or send me peace divine;
In bone and marrow burned, for rest I yearn,
Let me to heaven, Lord, or earth return. *(Exit.)*

SCENE IV.—A CAVE.

(David, Joab and Abiathar.)

DAVID. We need a day's good rest before we start
And this broad cavern gives the shelter we
Require; let the entrance be well guarded;
I have been warned of the King's approach
Whose chance we frustrate by a quick retreat.

(Exit Joab.)

ABIATHAR. And if he take us unawares?

DAVID.

We would,

There being no escape, resistance offer,

Or cut our way, or perish in the strife.

Who comes? and why in such a haste?—The King?—

JOAB. We are cut off; his escort marches hither,

A body armed well and numerous.

DAVID. Have they an inkling of our presence here?

JOAB. No, pelted by the storm they hither fly

For shelter, I assume; our men are ready.—

DAVID. The darkest corner hide our force, while we,
Observing unobserved, the sword in hand,
Await the sequel.—

(Exeunt David, Joab and Abiathar ; enter Doeg and men.)

DOEG. Spread here the royal rug
And cushions for his Majesty to rest,
And hurry back to lead him hitherward.
(Attendants do as bidden and go.)
If a demented fool a villain makes
His confidant, there is the dance of cat,
And mouse. Between the son of Kish and him
Of Jesse to bridge the chasm is neither in
My interest nor lies it in my grain
To foster peace, or shrink from furthering
The devil's business at the Hebrew's cost.
When Edom Jacob loved he reach'd the stage
Of weak senility. Am I an idiot?

(Enter Saul and Abner.)

SAUL. This couch recalls the time when on the turf
The feathered warblers lulled me into sleep.—

(Exeunt Abner and Doeg.)

Come sleep, I court thee, soother of my pain ;
Come dreams of earlier years when royalty
Was not the burning torment of my soul,
When, clear of guilt, the heart was throbbing mild,
Now sin-polluted, boiling like a hell!—
Poor man, poor King! How miserable to hate,
To be the hangman's mouthpiece, strangle lives,
Then have a hideous nightmare woven of
The hideous deed. Forgive, kind Lord, forgive!
I am so deep in crime, so deep in doubt,
So deep in woe, in error, in despair,
That God's infinite Mercy will be taxed
To wash my bloody record of its stains.—
Avaunt, ye haggard spectres, scare my soul
Not in this cave, that I an hour may taste
Of undisturbed rest. My soul, my soul—

(Falls asleep. Enter David and Joab.)

JOAB (*draws his sword*).

Here, finish him, the hunter of thy life,
Or give me leave to do the thing for thee.

DAVID. Hold off thy weapon from the Lord's anointed,
Whom I will shame unhurting, proving his
Injustice and my innocence.

(*He cuts off an end of Saul's robe and they retire;
whereupon yells are heard: "Abner, King, Saul!"*)

SAUL (*upstarting*). Who calls?—

Who is it cries, King?—

(*Enter Abner and Doeg.*)

ABNER. Who is he that cries Abner?

DOEG. I hear the captain's voice.

SAUL. Who is the captain?—

DAVID. Thy watches are asleep, O Abner, and but
For God's unslumbering Guardianship, no king
Is in thy keeping safe;—see here the proof:
The royal robe curtailing I withdrew;
Had I no love for Saul, his life I had
In hand.

SAUL (*moved*). Is that thy voice, my son?

DAVID. The voice
That Melancholy held aloof from thee.

SAUL. I stand remorseful and ashamed; henceforth,
I swear by all that sacred is to man,
No hair shall on thy head be touched against
Thy will; forgive, I see the wrong is mine.

DAVID. (*Approaching nearer with Joab and men.*)

Thy enemies, O King, are they who with
The serpent's forked tongue thy mind against
Me poisoned, who am threefold bound to thee
By faith and love and reverence Israel
Holds high and holy.—Malice not thy word
Distrusting, Oh my King, I feel constrained
To let a season pass or two before
I reassured thy presence seek, and her
Embrace that harbors Eden's bliss for me.

Meanwhile farewell ; may glory crown the head
And house of Saul. (*Exeunt David and his followers.*)

SAUL. He doubts my promise, doubts
My constancy—the better man ; aye, he,
The son of Jesse, *is* the better man.—
Thy man, O Samuel, he is thy man.

(*Enter Messenger.*)

Who sends thee hither, and wherefore ?

MESSENGER. Grave news
I bear, my liege ; Philistia is out
In panoply, and war is imminent,
Is what Prince Jonathan has charged me to
Impart your Majesty. (*Enter another Messenger.*)

SAUL. And what hast thou ?

SECOND MESS. Grim war is knocking at thy kingdom's gate,
My liege.

SAUL. Where stands the Philistine embattled ?

SECOND MESS. His army's bulk round Endor gathers force,
A mighty host defiant and equipped.

SAUL. Gird on thy sword, proud house of Saul, and face
Thy fate unflinching, come what may, aye, come
What must. (*To Abner.*) Philistia is up and we
Are weeks behind in warlike preparation ;
I know my Jonathan is wide awake ; let war
Our country's manhood rouse ; the trumpet sound,
And I myself will lead the dance to death.
(*Flourish of trumpets. Exeunt.*)

SCENE V.—GIBEAH. HOUSE OF SAUL.

(*Enter Ahinoam and Michal.*)

AHINOAM. Give it a second thought ; is he a man
To waver in his love ?

MICHAL (*in passion*). Would not return
When reassured ! Ah, woman though I am,
My soul's devotion mocked the sight of fear
When love the deed inspired !

AHINOAM. Yes, men are men ;
Who ever dreamt of Saul's propensity
To give his older heart to someone else
Than his Ahinoam? Yet Rizpah is
His all in all ; I am the cast-off thing.

MICHAEL. If I could poison swallow that I spit
My gall at Treason in an angel's shape
I were not thus consumed with impotence
That bites itself, as reptile wriggling in
A rage ! O David, music, truth and love
In thee I saw embodied, treacherous soul !

(Enter Jonathan.)

AHINOAM. Here, Jonathan may give thee comfort, girl.

JONATHAN. I need the gift I should bestow, dear mother.

AHINOAM. It is of David's absence that we spoke.

JONATHAN. His presence would a host of armed men
Outweigh at this uncheerful hour ; I am
Distracted when I think of him and his
Assistance lost to us thro' father's moods.

MICHAEL. If he were what I took him for, he were
With us ere this ; he stole my heart, the traitor.—

JONATHAN. What? sister, art thou mad?

MICHAEL. I hate his name.—

JONATHAN. No, show thou hast a woman's dignity
And common sense, instead of passing off
The love-sick, inexperienced maid. Shall he
Return to be assassinated in
His bed or at the board? I should not urge
His coming, knowing Saul's ill-hidden wrath.
Fret not thy temper, he is thine and safe.—
I come to get thy blessing, mother, that thou
Mayst thy Jonathan behold again.

AHINOAM. My pulse is beating fast, my son ; I am
Not sure that matters look so grave.—

JONATHAN. So grave
That I suggest immediate packing of
Our household gear for flight—

AHINOAM.

Why, Jonathan!—

JONATHAN. God grant that I the darkness see too dark!

Prudence dictates the caution to provide
You with an escort should it come to flight.
The enemy, should we defeat sustain,
Will make for Gibeah to sack our homes.—
Thy blessing, mother.—

AHINOAM (*her hand on his head*).

Thy guardian angels, Lord,
Protect my Jonathan, and may the King
Return victorious with our other sons!

JONATHAN. Amen! (*to Michal*) Dear girl, suspect thy David not
Of base desertion, farther from his heart
Than cowardice from mine. Like thee I should
Prefer to have him by my side, alas!
We have a formidable army to
Encounter and our King is drowned in gloom! (*Exit.*)

AHINOAM. If Jonathan foretells calamity
I fear we live to see reverses great
And dark. The King for Endor left, but said
No word about the dangers of the war;
Yes, he was drowned in gloom, and so am I. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI.—HOME OF THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

(*A room hung with pictures of wild animals around an oven where-
on a kettle is seen boiling, the flames bursting forth now and
then.*)

WITCH (*a wand in hand*).

The stars are bright, we hate the light,
The shades of night are on their flight
When day breaks forth, to west or north;
For south and east, the Lilith-beast
No babe can harm with hell-brewed charm.—
This broth will foil a wizard's toil
By magics dark to see the spark
Of things to come from hearse or tomb.—
(*Mixing the broth.*)

I mix herein a serpent's skin,
Nine limbs of lice, twelve teeth of mice,
A drop of gore, a tail I shore
Of an old rat ; and of a cat
This liver will with vapor fill
The space around, when every sound
Five miles away I hear and sway
The spirits small, whom I enthrall ;
Croak, croak and groan, I know the moan.
What comes ? who nears ? a man of fears.

(Saul knocks at the door.)

I know the rap, I hear the step,
It is a man of doubtful ken,
Who wishes most to see a ghost,
Whom I should call that he forestall
Some pending change he would derange.

(Saul knocks again at the door.)

Come in, come in, I will begin
To weave the spell in name of hell.

(Enter Saul disguised.)

Thy name, thy name is one of fame ;
I see yet more—'tis one of gore ;
Whoever thou, here thou must vow
To be as brute forever mute
And shalt deny to be my spy.

SAUL. Believe a man of honor, witch, who will
Thy secrets not betray, and pay thee well
If thou canst conjure up the spirit I
Would cause to prophesy events unborn.

WITCH. *(Draws a circle around the oven.)*

Prepare, prepare, while this I stir *(stirs the broth)*,
Of hell a share and Lilith dare.—
Man be not weak, these brutes will speak
As I the froth touch of the broth.

(The animals move and make hideous noises.)

They rouse him all, thy spirit call ;
Why art thou pale ? He will not fail.

SAUL. If I thy spirit's peace disturb, forgive,
O Samuel, but rise. Samuel, Samuel !

SAMUEL'S GHOST (*appearing in a haze*). Who breaks my peace?

SAUL. Thy Saul in deep distress.

WITCH. O Death! I am betrayed!

SAUL. Thy life is safe. (*Exit Witch.*)

SAMUEL'S GHOST. Thou, son of Kish, to-morrow ends thy time;
To-morrow will be blood, confusion, woe.— (*Exit Ghost.*)

SAUL. Woe, woe to me and mine! Not that I from
The shaft of death recoil, Oh, no! as for
His food and rest the tired slave does wait
So long I for my grave, if but my sons,
My Jonathan, at least, survive my fall.—
Thee, son of Jesse, here I miss, too blind,
Too jealous thy great qualities to make
The prop and pillar of my house; too late,
Too late to live a hero's life, remains
For Saul to die a King, to die a man. (*A trumpet is heard.*)
The trumpet calls the squadrons to the fray.
How, Jonathan!— (*Enter Jonathan fully armed.*)

JONATHAN. My care has traced thee hither, King;
We are on every side outnumbered and
Besieged; the foe is insolent, our men
Disheartened; wise it seems for thee to speak
To them a word of cheer.

SAUL. It shall be done,
And, being done, we strike ere daybreak at
The enemy.

JONATHAN. A blow well dealt might disconcert
His plans, confuse his ranks and give our men
The top.

SAUL (*in a soft voice*). My Jonathan—

JONATHAN. Thy pleasure, father?—

SAUL (*deeply moved*). My Jonathan—

JONATHAN (*folds his hands in suppressed pain*).

So dost thou credit me
With more than flesh can bear, my lord; I oft

Thy anger stood, but Oh! I cannot bear
Thy tears.

SAUL. No, let them flow, they thaw the frost
That ice-bound held this heart for years; yea, let
Them flow—Almighty's means and ends are dim.—

JONATHAN (*the trumpet is heard*).

The Lord Almighty cure thee of all ills.—
Now, lead us, King, in battle with an arm
Of steel, a voice of thunder, and an eye
Of lightning; lead us, for I see the gray
Of dawn the sable sunder in the east,
And hear the trumpet's call; lead on, my lord. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VII.—HEBREW ENCAMPMENT.

(*A wooden tower.*)

DOEG. They are all off to rout the enemy
Except myself and one Amalekite
Who hangs about me like a frightened bat.
I have the cheaper part, unanxious to
Be hustled to the thick of battle and
Get ventilated by a Philistine.
I have a brain for management to suit
My peaceful nature; ready tho' I am
To smother priests and witches, least and last
Am I disposed to jump at bristling men;
Wherefore I wisely chose this quiet post.—
Should Hebrew arms prevail, a flock of geese
Will not out-cackle me in noise as to
My daring feats, the scores I slew in passing,
The hits I gave and took, beside a string
Of miracles unheard of hitherto.—
The tide of battle turning for the heathen,
I am to hurry home and run off with
The women. Esau was a simpleton.

(*Noise of battle; enter the Amalekite.*)

AMALEKITE. They came to blows, they could not be surprised.—

DOEG (*ascending the tower*).

From this observatory I survey
The battlefield.—Aha, the ruse did fail ;
The Hebrews are outnumbered many times ;—
The dreadful Abner mows around him like
A Scythian—Where is Jonathan, and where
The King?—Ah, there the crown, I see the crown ;—
Prodigious fighters, what a band !—’Tis Saul
Himself and Jonathan that cut amain.—
That Abner is a savage boar ;—hurrah !
Philistia is losing ground ! hurrah !—
Mistake, mistake—the Hebrews waver ; now
There is a maze of swords and heads and spears.
Who fell ?—ah, valiant Jonathan !—’tis he,
’Tis he ;—confusion now and fury ;—Saul
Is raging like a tiger ; Abner has
His hands full to repel aggression from
The King ; the King is wounded—Saul is wounded ;
In full retreat—flying the King, no prince,
No chief with him ; he runs for life—we lost,
The Hebrews lost the battle ; chaos, chaos—
The King is running hitherward unfollowed.

(*Doeg descends.*)

SAUL (*entering, while the din of battle is heard*).

I bleed from fifty wounds, but none seems fatal ;—
My sons, my sons, not one of them alive—
My Jonathan the thrust did intercept
That should have pierced this frame—Oh, here
The man to end my wretchedness. This sword,
O Doeg, run it through this worthless trunk.— —

(*Hands him the sword.*)

DOEG. My liege—

SAUL. Spare me for agony and shame ?
Come, friendly Edomite, obey thy King.

DOEG. Impossible, my liege.—

SAUL. Then perish, slave—(*stabs Doeg*).

DOEG (*sinking*).

The furies tear thee—death—curse—hell—(*dies*).

SAUL (*the din of battle heard*). If man
 Be faithless, metal will be true; come, run
 Thro' me, my trusty javelin. (*Falls on the weapon.*) What am
 I made of, angry heavens, vengeful earth?
 Ye angels, demons dark or black, the steel
 Has done its work, what binds the soul within?
 (*Perceives the Amalekite.*)
 Come, whosoever thou, give me to death,
 For pity's sake! This bracelet take—my crown—
 (*Attendant stabs Saul, takes his bracelet and crown and runs off;
 a band of Philistines enter, discover Saul, yell out wild with
 joy and carry off his body in triumph.*)

SCENE VIII.—ZIKLAG. A ROOM.

(*David and Joab.*)

DAVID. No tidings from the seat of war; they deal
 In blood perchance, while we inactive let
 Our weapons rust; I had a fearful dream.—

JOAB. The kingdom is a trap thou hast to shun;
 Whose fault? No whim or treacherous choice has made
 Us exiles to Philistia's advantage. (*Enter Abiathar.*)

DAVID. What news is thine, Abiathar, dark or bright?

ABIATHAR. My lord, all Ziklag is in tears, but I
 Of Nob am thinking at this mournful hour.—

DAVID. Bad news, Abiathar, unfold what has occurred.
 (*Enter Messenger with crown and bracelet in hand.*)

ABIATHAR. Let him the tragedy confirm.

MESSENGER (*lays the valuables at David's feet*).

JOAB. Be brief.—

DAVID. This crown and bracelet are of Saul, great Lord!
 Thou comest from the battlefield, report.—

MESSENGER. These from the corpse of Saul I took, who with
 His sons and thousands of his army fell
 Upon Gilboa's height. The land is terror-stricken;
 Abner alone escaped unhurt; he fled.

JOAB. God's Judgment be extolled !

DAVID (*in extreme pain*). Oh, darken, sun !—
And Jonathan, what knowest thou of him ?

(*Enter Elders.*)

AMALEKITE. His father's breast defending in the brunt
Of battle, he was slain.

DAVID (*in great pain*). My Jonathan !—
Your message, hoary heads, how will it sound ?

ONE OF THE ELDERS. (*Exit Amalekite.*)
The tribe of Judah speaks thro' us, who name
Thee King, the House of Saul having ruled.

JOAB, ABIATHAR AND ELDERS.
The House of David live ! King David live !

DAVID. Give me a moment, that I gather thought
Now overpowered by emotions deep ;
I would to God I had that battle fought !
Let Joy be silent, Israel must weep. (*Strikes the harp.*)

My harp, my harp, thy gloomy strain

Vibrate and stir the solemn air ;

The saddest, mildest note of pain,

I need to soften my despair ;

Weep Israel, thy crowned head,

King Saul is gone—majestic man !

With him our sweetest prince is dead,

My Jonathan, my Jonathan.

In life they to each other clung,

United they are wreathed in death ;

Their prowess shall not pass unsung,

Who often smote the strong of Gath.

Tho' smitten by the heathen sword,

They fell not by the hand of man ;

It was the anger of the Lord,

My Jonathan, my Jonathan.

Thy love than brother's more to me,

As mother's care it never failed ;

As in the maid her lover's glee,

Within my soul thy love prevailed ;

My comfort thou in darkest hours,
Thy death bedims my life's brief span,
Thy grave my better joy devours,
My Jonathan, my Jonathan.

Tell not in Gath our heroes fell,
Lest Gath and Ashkelon rejoice ;
Weep age and youth, weep Israel,
Let woe and dirge your mourning voice ;
Gilboa's height unfruitful be,
No dew fall there, no breezes fan
Its rainless bleak sterility,
My Jonathan, my Jonathan. (*The curtain falls.*)

"THE QUEST... ...OF COLUMBUS"



A MEMORIAL POEM

IN TWELVE BOOKS.



The most pretentious work that has appeared is "The Quest of Columbus," a memorial poem in twelve books. The author seems in many instances to have caught the true spirit of poetry, and sings the epic in heroic verse that carries with it much of beauty. His description of the lonely voyage, the threatened mutiny, the first sight of the beam of light through the darkness, and then the shore that broke on the explorer's view in the morning, are all graphic. He does not stoop below the plane of verse that he has set for himself; he uses no tricks to win attention; the narrative and the lines are worthy. His verse flows easily.—*Chicago Times*.

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and the exile of the Jews from Spain. * * * The poem throughout is spiritedly written; the movement is rapid and stirring.—*Jewish Messenger of New York*.

Its purpose, as explained in a prefatory note, is to portray the almost superhuman endeavors of Columbus to attain his end, and his final triumph over well-nigh insurmountable obstacles. Interwoven with "The Quest of Columbus" are the siege of Granada and the banishment of the Jews from Spain. The work is in several meters and the proportions are noble, comprising some 10,000 lines.—*Philadelphia Inquirer*.

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An heroic subject, indeed! A new world discovered; a race overthrown; a people exiled. In this poem Rev. Iliowizi presents the historic personages of the time of his work with the power of a poet and the carefulness of a student. He has delved into the literature and history of his subject and has given poetic life to the lay figures of prosaic chronicles and tedious tones. * * * In books nine and ten we accompany Columbus upon his memorable voyage; live with him through the days of weary hope and agony and danger; catch with him the first glimpse of the new world which was to be America, and throb with him in exultation at the successful issue of his venture. * * * Full of glowing metaphors and replete with apostrophes teeming with poetic fervor, the poem is one that can take rank with some of the best works of the century. There are passages that seem to have been inspired, so beautiful and felicitous is their construction. There are lines which in their power and beauty are equal to many found in works the fame of which will endure through the ages. Here and there the rhetorical moral admonition reveals the student and expounder of Holy Writ. Many lines are suggestive of Scriptural influences. * * * Many other passages in which melody and inspiration step forth in glowing poetry could be quoted, did space permit, but for the enjoyment of these we must refer the reader to the work itself, which is beautifully issued.—*The Jewish Exponent, Philadelphia*.

Rev. Mr. Iliowizi's poetic book, "The Quest of Columbus," has been very favorably commented upon and is regarded as one of the main productions of the time bearing upon the momentous discovery of the Genoese navigator.—*Public Ledger, Philadelphia*.

The verse is in pentameter, varied with iambic quatrain, and its heroic events are told with historic precision. The opening canto is a picture of rejoicing at Seville over the wedding of Don Alonzo, heir apparent to Portugal. The second pictures Columbus with his son Diego, on his way to France, disgusted with his treatment at the Spanish court. The fourth canto pictures Granada beleaguered by the armies of Spain. The fifth, the fall of Granada. The sixth canto deals directly with the annoyances of the great discoverer, face to face with his enemies at Santa Fe, when De Talavera spurns his demands, and Columbus as firmly demands that they are just. The eighth deals with the banishment of the Spanish Hebrews, and seems to be out of place in this story. Canto nine is finely descriptive of the departure of the Armada in quest of the new world, and is the best of the volume. The eleventh pictures the return of Columbus and the joy in Hispania over his discoveries. The descriptive pictures upon sighting the new world are of marked excellence. The twelfth and closing canto is a series of sketches of the beauty of the new discoveries of savage life, troubles with enemies and the homeward voyage.—*Chicago Inter-Ocean*.

PUBLIC LEDGER, Philadelphia.

Pleasing alike to Mind and Ear.

The whole is intended to teach the virtue of toleration and to portray the efforts of the Admiral to reach his long-sought goal. Mr. Iliowizi has cast his poem in pentameter verse, which well illustrates the case and carries the theme forward with a sonorous roll, pleasing alike to mind and ear.

The author displays a faculty for character drawing and ability to keep in hand the three-fold design of his narrative, without loss to the general effect. The style resembles that of "Marmion." Philadelphia: H. J. Smith & Co.

THE HERALD OF CHICAGO.

The most astonishing work, however, of the Columbian output is "**The Quest of Columbus**," a memorial poem in twelve books, by Henry Iliowizi. It is an octavo volume of 350 pages. The first four books are written in the heroic couplet, the other eight in the iambic quatrain. It is a very remarkable performance indeed.

THE QUEST OF COLUMBUS.

There has been somewhat of a shortage thus far in the poetical side of Columbian literature, though there has been such a superabundance on the prose side that the feeling of disappointment has not been keen. There need be no such feeling now. The lack has been supplied. At a single effort Rev. Henry Iliowizi, of Philadelphia, has more than filled the "aching void."

It would be saying too much to intimate that there is anything Homeric or even Miltonic, in the "**Quest**," but it can truthfully be said that it is an exceedingly meritorious work. The theme is a lofty one, too lofty, perhaps, for the poet's muse; but he has treated it with consummate skill.

Detroit News, Michigan.

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A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

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